CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN©

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage

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FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE C-RRC

At least one year has gone by since the Revolution of 1989 began the process of political change throughout East Central Europe and accelerated it further in the Soviet Union. It is no surprise that Carpathian Rus', located in the heart of the European continent, has been deeply affected by these revolutionary changes. Wherever Rusyns live—whether in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, or Yugoslavia—they have from the outset taken advantage of their newly-found democratic freedoms. As we have seen from the pages of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Rusyns have since 1989 created no less than five new organizations in each of the countries where they live. They have also started four new publications (*Besida, Holos rusyniv, Otčyj chram, Rusyn*) written in various Rusyn dialects, which are designed to present a pro-Rusyn understanding of their past and present.

In the course of this multifarious activity, two age-old problems have been revived once again: (1) the question of national identity (are Rusyns a separate nationality or are they a branch of Ukrainians?); and (2) the struggle between the two traditional churches—Greek Catholic and Orthodox—for the allegiance of the people. At least since World War II, political repression made it dangerously impossible to discuss these problems openly. But in the freer atmosphere since 1989, both the nationality and religious problems have once again been passionately debated, and some have even suggested that they cannot be resolved unless there occurs first economic and, most especially, political change. Political change for certain Rusyn spokespersons means not only individual democratic rights but also some form of economic autonomy or even self-rule for Rusyn-inhabited lands.

During the debates, Rusyns in the European homeland have also revived another tradition. They have turned to their Rusyn-American brethren in the United States with requests for information about their own and our historical past, for financial assistance and advice in religious, cultural, technical matters, and in general for moral support in their efforts to reestablish a clearly-defined Rusyn national identity.

The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has been one of the primary places to which Rusyns throughout the European homeland have turned. Considering our own limited means, we have done whatever possible in areas that are related to our own cultural-educational mandate. This has included sending our publications gratis to individuals and organizations in the European homeland and providing modest financial support for scholars to do research or participate in conferences dealing with Rusyn subjects. Added to such activities is the new post of C-RRC Communications Desk, which has since early 1990 provided on a somewhat systematic basis information about Rusyn developments in Europe to mainline media in the United States as well as to key figures in the American government and Congress.

Nonetheless, some of you have expressed the concern that the C-RRC is not doing enough. That in this time of rapid revolutionary change in Europe, the survival of the "Rusyn cause" depends on the realization of some form of political autonomy, even independence, and that the C-RRC should be taking an active role to help make this possible. I will not comment here whether such goals are or are not desirable. What I will comment on is the role of the C-RRC.

The C-RRC was established in 1978 as a non-profit cultural-educational organization. Our primary goal was and remains to promote research and disseminate intelligent and informed publications about Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe and America. Our primary audience for such materials has been and still is Americans of Rusyn background. Our secondary audience includes American scholarly and governmental circles interested in the Carpathian Rus' homeland just as they are interested in any other part of the world, especially as it may be of strategic interest to the United States. Carpathian Rus' falls into the category of such interest since it is found within the borders of the Soviet Union and several East Central European countries.

While, undoubtedly, the C-RRC is sympathetic to the cultural specificity of Carpatho-Rusyns, we have always striven to remain neutral on religious and nationality problems. We have always tried to provide balanced coverage of Greek (Byzantine) Catholic and Orthodox developments as well as information on all national orientations, even those which argue against Rusyn specificity. Moreover, we have tried to do this in a manner that avoid conflict and promotes understanding.

There are circles in both Europe and America that are not sympathetic to the idea of Carpatho-Rusyn specificity and that have misread our work as being political in nature. The C-RRC is not a political organization. While we must continue to report on political developments in the homeland, and while our staff, advisors, and supporters may have their own particular political or religious preferences, we as an organization cannot become involved or promote through lobbying or other means political demands such as recently have been heard that call, for instance, for a free economic zone or self-rule for Soviet Transcarpathia, or even a change in international boundaries. As an organization, the C-RRC should neither condone nor condemn such developments; it should, however, do its best to understand them and report them to our readers and to the American public at large.

Some of you may conclude that the above position seems to be a cop-out or that it reflects the kind of lack of commitment often associated with scholarly-type organizations. It is neither. We are simply a cultural-educational organization doing what we know best and what, moreover, we are legally mandated to do. This may not seem to be the most exciting kind of activity, especially when Americans of other East European backgrounds are marching in the streets, picketing embassies, or politicking in the European homeland in response to the serious and often dramatic events unfolding before our eyes on nightly television reports.

Yes, all of that does seem so exciting, so real. But someone also has to do the more tedious jobs: to record what is happening in the world of Carpatho-Rusyns; and, even more important, to provide for the group a firm source of knowledge about itself. The C-RRC is the only organization outside the European homeland that does this. And because of our very limited personnel, financial, and linguistic resources, we can at best achieve our limited goals after great effort and self-sacrifice on the part of the few individuals who work to produce and distribute our publications.

This does not mean that political action and nation-building are not worthy activities. These, however, are for others to contemplate doing, whether through existing organizations or through new ones. This is not and cannot be the function of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Paul Robert Magocsi
January 1, 1991

NICK HOLONYAK, JR.

On November 13, 1990, United States President George Bush awarded the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology to 30 scientists, engineers, and mathematicians, including a son of Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants, Nick Holonyak, Jr. Mr. Bush described the laureats as "real life pioneers who press the limits of their field." Dr. Holonyak, who was honored for his research on semi-conductor lasers, has been Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at University of Illinois, Urbana, since 1963. He is considered the inventor of the first light-emitting diode (LED) and also the control element used in many household light dimmers. (A *diode* is an electronic device through which current can pass freely in only one direction.)

Nick Holonyak, Jr. was born on November 3, 1928, in Zeigler, Illinois, a small town in the south-central part of the state which at the time had a population of about 3500. The town was (and still is to some extent) a producer of bituminous coal which in that region is mined underground rather than strip-mined. In fact, Zeigler lies in the same seam of coal deposit that other Rusyn immigrants mined in western Pennsylvania. Illinois was then America's third largest coal-producing state, and many immigrants from the Carpatho-Rusyn villages of pre-World War I Austria-Hungary made their way there including Holonyak's parents.

Holonyak's father, Mykola, was born in Nové Selo, a village near the Tisa River in what was then Bereg County. Attracted by the economic lure of the coal fields, Mykola Holonyak arrived in Baltimore in 1909 and proceeded to western Pennsylvania. He became an itinerant bituminous miner, working variously in western Pennsylvania, southern Illinois, Montana, and again in western Pennsylvania near the borough of Export. Holonyak's mother was born near Chust in the historic Hungarian county of Máramaros and arrived in America in 1921. Like many of our people, Mrs. Holonyak was fluent in the Hungarian as well as Rusyn language. The couple lived in Zeigler until the late 1920s, and then moved to Glen Carbon, Illinois (near St. Louis) during the next decade.

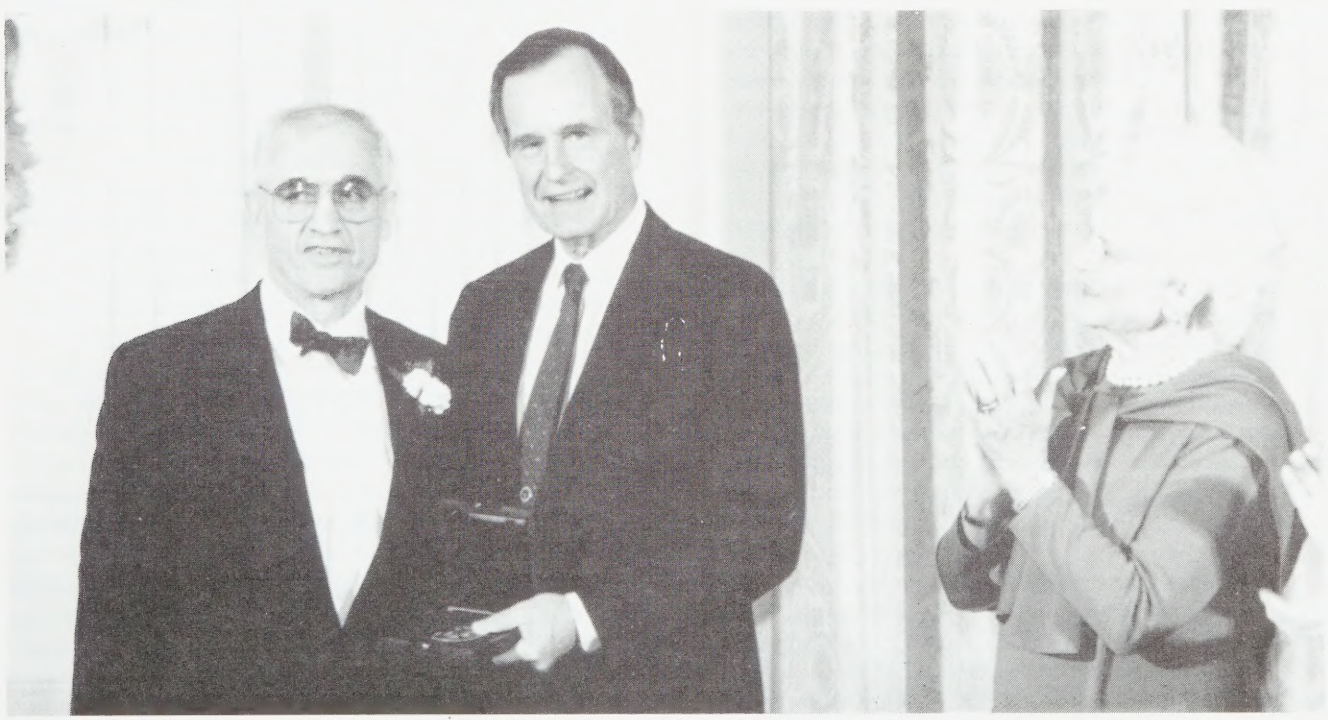
In his pioneering book, *Ukrainians in the United States*, Dr. Wasyl Halich commented on the mining community of Zeigler with its two Eastern-rite churches and about 500 miners: "Some of these miners are still backward and call themselves 'Russians' or 'Rusniaks', while all of them are *Ukrainians* from the provinces of East Galicia and Ruthenia and speak Ukrainian." Holonyak's father certainly would have disagreed with this interpretation.

Reached by telephone at his Urbana home, Professor Holonyak recalled how his father had emphasized to him that "we are part of the main body of Slavs but of a different group than the Ukrainians yet similar to them." "We are Transcarpathian Rusyns," said his father, "and we are Orthodox not Uniate." Holonyak also related that his parents took him to services at a Russian church in Royalton, Illinois, probably the Church of the Protection of the Holy Virgin under the jurisdiction of what was then called the Russian Orthodox Metropolia.

Professor Holonyak earned his B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering at the Univeristy of Illinois in 1950, 1951, and 1954. His graduate work was done under the direction of Nobel laureat, John Bardeen. As his career progressed, Holonyak published several works in his research specialty. In 1989, he was awarded the Edison Medal of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

According to a biography he submitted to *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Holonyak "enjoys reading and some running and weight-lifting." He is fluent in a second language, the Carpatho-Rusyn spoken by his immigrant parents. Nick Holonyak, Jr. is another example of an American who has reached the top of his profession while remaining proud of his Carpatho-Rusyn heritage.

Richard Renoff
Garden City, Long Island



DECLARATION OF THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS CONCERNING RESTORATION OF THE TRANSCARPATHIAN OBLAST TO THE STATUS OF AN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC

Not all the ancient Slavic principalities were united under Kievan Rus', which according to the *Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia* extended from the region between the Volga and Oka rivers to Transcarpathia, i.e., to the peaks of the Carpathian mountains. Russia, the Ukraine, and Belorussia evolved from the principalities which had been united in Kievan Rus'. The West Slavic principalities of the Croats, ancestors of Subcarpathian Rusyns, found themselves after 896 under the rule of Hungary and eventually the Austro-Hungarians monarchy.

World War I contributed to the collapse of the monarchy and to the formation on its territory of numerous sovereign Slavic countries. In the process of settling these problems, certain interested powers, together with the international community represented by forty-eight countries, officially recognized the Subcarpathian Rusyns as a nation that had the right to self-determination. At the Paris Peace Conference, the treaties of St. Germain (1919) and Trianon (1920) recognized "an autonomous Rusyn territory south of the Carpathian mountains within the Czechoslovak state with the fullest degree of self-government compatible with the unity of Czechoslovakia." The League of Nations was to regulate compliance with the terms of these treaties.

However, the government of Czechoslovakia was in no hurry to grant the "fullest degree of self government" either to the Subcarpathian Rusyns or to the Slovaks, who also were incorporated into Czechoslovakia by the St. Germain and Trianon peace treaties. The pretext was that the Territorial Commission of the Paris Peace Conference, acting on a Czechoslovak government appeal, established only a temporary demarcation line between Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus', extending from Čop to Užhorod following the railway line and along the Už River to the summit of the Carpathians. After only one meeting, the government commission unanimously decreed as indisputable the border between Subcarpathian Rus' and Slovakia along a line passing by [the towns and villages] of Regetovka, Giraltovce, Snina, Sobrance, and Čop. In 1921, the Czechoslovak government assured the League of Nations that, in that same year, it would legitimize the border between Subcarpathian Rus' and Slovakia. However, intending to delay granting these peoples "the fullest degree of self-government," it did not honor its commitment.

At the beginning of October 1938, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus' both finally attained the status of autonomous republics. The present-day territory of Subcarpathian Rus' was occupied on March 14-18, 1939. In a protest note to the German ambassador, dated March 18, 1939, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, M.M. Litvinov, stated that the actions of the German government "were a signal to the Hungarian army to invade brutally the republic of Subcarpathian Rus' and to violate its basic human rights."

Subcarpathian Rus' was liberated on November 4, 1944. On November 13, members of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia residing in Transcarpathia held their first party conference, and on November 19, 1944, they founded the Communist party of the Transcarpathian Ukraine, electing as its most powerful body a Central Committee and adopting a program of action. The first Transcarpathian Communist party congress also decided to hold the First Congress of National Committees that were being formed everywhere throughout the countryside. The Congress of National Committees took place on November 26, 1944, and passed a resolution transforming Subcarpathian Rus' into the Transcarpathian Ukraine. The highest body for the Transcarpathian Ukraine, a National Council (Narodna Rada) headed by Ivan Turjanycja, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Transcarpathian Communist party, was elected. A manifesto was also adopted proclaiming the unification of the Transcarpathian Ukraine with the Soviet Ukraine and thereby its secession from the republic of Czechoslovakia. During the aforementioned First Congress of National Committees, Petro Sova, the chairman of the Užhorod municipal national council stated: "In addition to liberating us, the Red Army restored our right to self-determination. We want to make wise use of this right."

On the occasion of the conclusion of the unification of the Transcarpathian Ukraine with the Soviet Ukraine, the prime minister of Czechoslovakia, Zdeněk Fierlinger, in an address given on June 29, 1945, called Transcarpathian Ukraine a small Slavic country. In his reply, Soviet foreign minister Vjačeslav Molotov stated: "the people of Transcarpathian Ukraine have inherited the possibility of deciding their own fate."

The following are facts, which reveal that the Communists and national committees established the Transcarpathian Ukraine as a sovereign state:

the formation by the Communists of an independent party of the Transcarpathian Ukraine and the election by these Communists of the most powerful party organ—the Central Committee of the Transcarpathian Communist party and its secretariat;

the election of the most powerful state and legislative body—the National Council of the Transcarpathian Ukraine—by the Congress of National Committees;

the recognition by international treaties of a historical Rusyn national territory (albeit divided) as the territory of a sovereign Transcarpathian Ukraine;

the existence of its own state flag, national anthem, jurisprudence, supreme court, attorney general, national guard, and various other state institutions;

the inalienable right of the Transcarpathian Ukraine challenged by neither Czechoslovakia nor Soviet military authorities, to self-determination, to choose its administration and government, as well as to select and develop its own political, socioeconomic, and cultural systems and to implement actively these rights;

the recognition on the territory of the Transcarpathian Ukraine by the Soviet military authorities of the legal system and governmental organs of the Transcarpathian Ukraine and not those of Czechoslovakia;

the absence of opposition by other states to the actual transformation of Subcarpathian Rus' into the sovereign state of the Transcarpathian Ukraine.

Obviously, the annexation to the Ukraine of a sovereign state with rights of an autonomous republic did not suit Stalin's policy of the partial dissolution of national-territorial formations which already existed in the Soviet Union. Already on January 1, 1946, when the Transcar-

pathian Ukraine became part of Soviet Ukraine, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR sent to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR a groundless petition appealing for the dissolution of the Transcarpathian Ukraine's sovereign status and its replacement as the Transcarpathian Oblast. On January 22, 1946, in contravention of international and state law, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree dissolving the sovereign state of the Transcarpathian Ukraine and creating in its place the Transcarpathian Oblast. The result of this was to liquidate automatically—although only *de jure*—the Slavic nation of Rusyns.

Taking into consideration that the actions of Stalin and his supporters concerning the dissolution of a Central European sovereign state were illegal, and considering the aspirations of the indigenous population of present-day Transcarpathia for the restoration of its nationhood and its status as an autonomous republic, the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Tovarystvo Karpats'kych Rusyniv):

(1) Appeals to the president of USSR, M.S. Gorbachev, to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to revoke the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, dated January 22, 1946, transforming the Transcarpathian Ukraine into the Transcarpathian Oblast, on the grounds that it contravenes international law and the Constitution of the USSR, and to issue in its place a new decree transforming the former Transcarpathian Ukraine into the autonomous republic of Subcarpathian Rus';

(2) Proposes that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR reexamine its petition to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that dissolved the Transcarpathian Ukraine and replaced it with the Transcarpathian Oblast;

(3) Requests that the United Nations, whose predecessor was the League of Nations, assume responsibility for overturning Stalin's arbitrary dissolution of the Rusyn autonomous territory and Rusyn nationhood, both of which had been settled by the peace treaties of St. Germain and Trianon.

This declaration was debated and ratified on September 29, 1990, at a session of the executive committee of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in the city of Užhorod.

The foregoing declaration was first published in *Otčyj chram* (September-October 1990), the publication of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Užhorod, and subsequently in the oblast-wide Transcarpathian newspaper, *Molod' Zakarpattja* (November 3, 1990). Prepared by Petro Hodmaš, the declaration reveals the political goals of some members of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns. Such an approach to the Rusyn revival has elicited a strong critical response from Ukrainian-oriented leaders in Transcarpathia and in the neighboring Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia.

For instance, thirteen Ukrainian-oriented organizations in Transcarpathian issued a counter-declaration that was published in the newspaper of the Transcarpathian Communist party (*Zakarpats'ka pravda*, November 21, 1990). In part, the counter-declaration read:

"We call on the leadership of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns to cease propaganda, which reflects the ideas of Muscovite chauvinists, Budapest Uhro-Rusyns, Prague Carpatho-Russians, and politicized American Rusyns, for whom cultural Rusynism is alien. We ask that [Ukrainian] Kiev and L'viv, Kharkiv and Odessa not be held guilty for the hardships brought to Transcarpathia by Stalin and Brezhnev.

"Transcarpathians! Don't be fooled. Our forefathers fought for autonomy in Hungary, Austria-Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. However, now that we live in our own state, the Ukrainian SSR, whose Supreme Soviet has proclaimed a 'Declaration of Sovereignty for the Ukraine' which guarantees the right of free national development for all national minorities and ethnic groups living on its territory, to call for autonomy of Transcarpathia in this context must be considered nothing less than national treachery!"

The counter-declaration was published in several Ukrainian-language newspapers in the Soviet Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, as well as in Canada and in the United States. Frequently, those same newspapers have included commentary that considers the idea of Carpatho-Rusyn autonomy as a threat to the "inalienable unity" of a future free Ukrainian state.

A more serious response has been the creation of a working group convened by the Transcarpathian Council of National Deputies (oblast parliament) to study the socio-economic, historical, legal, and linguistic-ethnographic issues raised by the Carpatho-Rusyn autonomy declaration. One goal of the parliamentary working group is to analyze how the declaration reflects the historical evolution of Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) and the territory's relation to a future decentralized Ukrainian state made up of several distinct regions. The working group is under the chairmanship of the Užhorod State University historian, Professor Ivan Hrančak, and it includes pro-Ukrainian as well as pro-Rusyn activists, among them the chairman of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, Mychajlo Tomčanij. The group held its first meeting in February 1991 at the parliament building in Užhorod. The discussion was concerned with uncovering the "blank spots" of Rusyn history which have been glossed over during the past four decades by Marxist scholars and propagandists.

The working group also criticized the recent spate of newspaper articles by scholars on the Rusyn problem. In the concluding words of Professor Hrančak:

"The problem of Rusynism has always existed and cannot be removed from history. Unfortunately, each of the authors has chosen only those facts which reflect a Ukrainophile viewpoint. They have even called Aleksander Duchnovyč a Ukrainian, even though he never once used in all his writings the word Ukraine. . . . The other shortcoming of the recent publications is that the Ukrainophiles have in a simplified manner described their Rusyn opponents with epithets such as enemies, traitors, destroyers, spies, etc. One must ask the question, why do we need such labels? Would it not be better to conduct the discussion in a scholarly spirit?"

"Our Ukrainophiles have been retaliated against a professor from American scholarly circles, Paul Robert Magocsi, depicting him as an agent and servant of American imperialism. Although I do not share Magocsi's views, I nonetheless respect him as a scholar who has research publications that are known world-wide. His critics, on the other hand, either do not have any scholarly credentials in this field or no serious works whatsoever, or they simply continue to express themselves on the level of yellow journalism." (*Novyny Zakarpattja*, February 6, 1991, p. 5)

REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On November 17, 1990, the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyns'ka Obroda) held its first plenary session after which it issued a declaration of principles which read, in part:

"Although for a whole century we have been repressed and each regime has done everything to assimilate us, we Rusyns have survived our unfortunate fate and pressure from other peoples, and we have not succumbed to the efforts made to Magyarize, Slovakize, Russify, or Ukrainianize us. We have preserved a consciousness of belonging to a Rusyn people, and we want to develop further our traditions, heritage, culture, and preserve our language.

"The present democratic changes in Czecho-Slovakia and throughout all of Eastern Europe have produced good possibilities to overcome the mistakes and damage done to the Rusyn people, who wish to be a fully equal component of the Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic.

"For this reason, we unanimously demand:

the recognition of Rusyns as a distinct nationality in Czecho-Slovakia with all rights which, according to the constitution, other nationalities have;

equality of the Rusyn language with the languages of other national minorities in Czecho-Slovakia; the possibility for the Rusyn language to be taught in schools where Rusyn children study; and the use of Rusyn in newspapers and journals destined for people of Rusyn background as well as on the radio and at other events that take place in those areas where Rusyns live;

the implementation of possibilities for contacts with Rusyns who live abroad, whether with individuals or organizations. Such contacts are necessary if we want to publish books for Rusyn schools."

(Cited from the text of the Declaration of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, in "Holos rusyniv," *Nove žyttja*, December 7, 1990, p. 4).

Legnica, Poland. On December 8, 1990, the first congress of the Lemko Association (Stovaryšȳnja Lemkiv) was held in Legnica, a town in western Poland (historic Silesia) where many Lemkos were forcibly deported after World War II. Among the participants were 40 delegates representing 10 branches. The Lemko Association of Poland was founded in April 1989, and at present has 270 members organized in 14 branches. Its primary goal is to raise the national consciousness of Lemkos in Poland through publications, theatrical performances, and other cultural events.

At the first congress, eleven members of an executive board were chosen including the following officers: Andrij Kopča (chairman); Petro Trochanovskij (vice-chairman); Jaroslav Horoščak (second vice-chairman); Adam Barna (secretary); and Stefan Kosovskij (treasurer). It is interesting to note that according to biographies in the latest issue of *Besida*, the association's journal, all but three members of the executive board were born after World War II. Thus, the Lemko Association represents primarily Lemkos who are of the younger generation. Among the topics discussed at the first congress was the possibility of cooperation with the recently-founded Union of Lemkos (Ob''jednannja Lemkiv), represented by its chairman, Fedir Goč. The Union of Lemkos comprises primarily Lemkos of the older generation born before World War II (Fedir Goč, Pavel Stefanovskij, Michal Donskyj), who were active already in the 1950s and 1960s, but who recently have adopted a Ukrainian orientation that is not accepted by the Lemko Association.

Andrij Kopča, chairman, addressing the First Congress of the Lemko Association.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On December 20, 1990, the Aleksander Duchnovyč Society (Obščestvo Aleksandra Duchnovyča) was restored. The society came into being in Užhorod in 1923, and quickly had branches throughout Subcarpathian Rus' and among Carpatho-Rusyns living in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. In 1933, the Prešov branch became a self-governing institution with responsibility for all affiliates in Slovakia. Its main activity was to establish reading rooms in local Rusyn villages (37 by the end of the 1930s), to sponsor annual Rusyn days (*rus'ki dni*), and to erect in Prešov the monumental statue (still standing) of the nineteenth-century "national awakener," Aleksander Duchnovyč. The Duchnovyč Society promoted the use of the Rusyn language in the lower grades of schools, but favored literary Russian for higher grades and for use in publications. In short, the society felt that Carpatho-Rusyns were part of a single "common Russian people" (*obščerusskij narod*). After the Communists came to power in 1948, all prewar organizations were liquidated, including the Duchnovyč Society.

Those who have resurrected the Duchnovyč Society in late 1990 consider themselves to be culturally "Russian." They hope to unite "Rusyns, Ukrainians, and Russians" in reading rooms and to work with other peoples throughout Czechoslovakia in order to build a democratic and socially just society. The basic goal is to "protect the national interests of the Rusyns and to raise their level of national consciousness."

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On December 21, 1990, members of the "Rusyn-Ukrainian Intelligentsia in Czecho-Slovakia," representing eleven pro-Ukrainian organizations, issued a fifteen-point statement concerning "present developments in our cultural-national life." Among the points raised were the following:

"1. We support the unity and inviolability of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, in which we wish to live as a fully equal nationality with the possibility to develop our national and cultural life.

2. We consider that the Rusyn-Ukrainians comprise not two but one nationality.

3. We consider the creation of a distinct 'Rusyn' nationality, separate from the Ukrainian people, to be a temporary step leading to the ultimate Slovakization of our people. Therefore, we do not agree with the anti-Ukrainian orientation of the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyns'ka Obroda) and other organizations of a similar separatist character.

5. We criticize the administrative bureaucratic methods used in the 1950s during the introduction of the Ukrainian national orientation, although we consider the idea of our people accepting a Ukrainian national orientation and the Ukrainain literary language and culture a positive step on the road to consolidating our people's national identity.

7. The efforts to create a separate 'Rusyn' language are not new. . . . Such past efforts proved to be unrealistic and unrealizable.

11. We consider all efforts that question the present-day boundaries in Europe, including the boundary between Czecho-Slovakia and the Soviet Union, to be a political provocation that is opposed to the Helsinki agreement and other international treaties.

12. We support the activity of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czecho-Slovakia (SRUČ), which we consider the representative of all our people.

15. We support without reservation the Declaration of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR, dated July 16, 1990, regarding the sovereignty of the Ukraine, since we see in a free, independent Ukrainian state a guarantee for our own future development within Czecho-Slovakia."

Košice, Czechoslovakia. On January 15, 1991, the Košice studio of the Slovak state television network inaugurated a weekly half-hour program for the national minorities in Slovakia. About five to ten minutes are devoted to the Rusyns, who for the first time have their own television program in Czechoslovakia. The television program has opted to broadcast in Rusyn, not Ukrainian.

Vatican City. On January 16, 1991, Pope John Paul II confirmed the positions of three Greek Catholic bishops in Subcarpathian Rus' (Soviet Transcarpathia). After the Greek Catholic eparchy of Mukačevo was liquidated by the Soviet authorities in 1949 and the church forbidden to function, the faithful, clergy, and hierarchy were forced to function underground for nearly four decades as a "clandestine church." It was not until 1988, during the era of change under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, that the Greek Catholic bishops who had functioned secretly for years felt secure enough to make themselves known publicly. The three prelates who have now been confirmed in their positions by the Pope are: Ivan Semedij, bishop of the Greek Catholic eparchy of Mukačevo-Užhorod, and his two auxiliaries: Bishop Josyf Holovač and Bishop Ivan Margityč.

The Pope made the announcement at the same time that he confirmed the positions of seven bishops in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archdiocese of L'viv and that he nominated five Latin-rite bishops for dioceses in the Soviet Ukraine. What remains unclear is the jurisdictional status of the Eparchy of Mukačevo-Užhorod. The eparchy had historically never been part of the Ukrainian archdiocese of L'viv, and it remains to be seen whether the Vatican will change its status or allow it to continue (like the neighboring Eparchies of Prešov and Hajdúdorog) directly under the authority of the Holy See. The next issue of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* will include the text of a letter on this matter from Bishops Semedij and Holovač to the Pope.

Bratisalva, Czechoslovakia. On January 24, 1991, the Slovak government's advisory council on nationalities and ethnic groups met to discuss three issues: (1) the status of minority schools; (2) the March 1991 census of the country's population; and (3) the budget for financing minority cultural institutions. All four Rusyn-Ukrainian members of the government's advisory council (Ivan Bicko, Vasyl' Dacaj, Mykola Mušynka, Vasyl' Turok) as well as the acting head of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia (Viktor Koval') took part in the discussions.

No decision on the schools was taken, other than to reiterate that there are only 17 Ukrainian-language elementary schools and 1 high school (*gymnasium*) left in the Prešov Region. The reason for this "catastrophic situation" is primarily because Rusyn parents do not want their children to study Ukrainian. As for the census, the government accepted the proposal that there will be separate columns—one for Rusyn and one for Ukrainian—for citizens to respond regarding their nationality and native language. The most controversial issue concerned finances in the 1991 state budget. The professional Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater in

Prešov (formerly the Ukrainian National Theater), which includes both the Duklja Folk Ensemble and a theatrical ensemble whose performances have since last year been given primarily in Rusyn, has received the same budget as last year. The Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians, which continues to maintain a pro-Ukrainian national orientation, has had its budget cut in half, from eight to four million crowns.

Transcarpathian Response to Solzhenitsyn's Comments On Nationalities

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's brochure, *How Shall We Rebuild Russia?* (*Kak nam obustroit' Rossiju?*), was published in mid-September 1990, in two of Moscow's leading newspapers. Although the essay also deals with economic and political questions, the five sections devoted to the nationalities issue have attracted the most attention. In a section addressed to Ukrainians and Belorussians, Solzhenitsyn touches on the historical attitude of Carpatho-Rusyns to Russia.

Solzhenitsyn's proposed solution to the current turmoil in the republics is to dissolve the Soviet empire, to allow the non-Slavic republics to secede, and to create a new state structure called the "Pan-Russian Union" (*Rossijskij sojuz*), consisting of the three Slavic republics—Russia, the Ukraine, and Belorussia. The author's stated intention was to provoke discussion, and response was not long in coming from the nationalities affected, including a letter from an Užhorod scholar who takes issue with Solzhenitsyn's comments on Carpatho-Rusyns—Valerij Padjak, "What Then Shall We Rebuild?" (*Tak čto že budem obstraivat'?*) in *Molod' Zakarpattja*, 27 October, 1990, p. 5.

Addressing Ukrainians and Belorussians, Solzhenitsyn appeals to their common historical roots in Kievan Rus' and advances the traditional Slavophile vision of a single nation, split into three branches as a result of the Mongol invasion and Polish colonization. He strongly disapproves of Ukrainian separatist sentiments, and although he states categorically that Ukrainians should not be held in union with Russia by force, he hopes that they will choose "reunification" with Russia in a Slavic union. As evidence for his argument that the East Slavic peoples are in fact one people, he cites the following example. In nineteenth-century Galicia, the national council founded in 1848 bore the name *Holovna Russka Rada* and, he argues, it was only by Austrian coercion that the Carpatho-Rusyn people (*karpatorossy*) were torn away from the Russian nationality and language and subjected to Ukrainianization. With his emphasis on the "Russianness" of the Rusyn people, Solzhenitsyn endorses the Russophile orientation to Rusyn national identity.

Solzhenitsyn's proposal for a Pan-Russian Union drew immediate criticism from Ukrainian spokespersons, who accused him of adhering to ideas of Russian great-power chauvinism and insulting Ukrainian national dignity. Valerij Padjak repeats these objections, focusing on Solzhenitsyn's identification of Rusyns with Russians. He is not convinced by the argument that the East Slavic nations share a common culture and historical roots, which, he says, completely ignores the contemporary centrifugal forces in the Ukraine and its July 1990 declaration of sovereignty. And he resents Solzhenitsyn's "skipping over Zaporožja, the birthplace of the Ukrainian Cossack movement" and "the ancient city of L'viv, now the center of the rebirth of Ukrainian national consciousness" to single out the case of the western Ukraine, which Padjak considers a faulty basis for generalization. He then proceeds to lecture Solzhenitsyn on Carpatho-Rusyn history.

Padjak asserts that even before the coming of th Magyars the Carpathians were populated by Rusyns, although he doubts that they ever formed a part of Kievan Rus'. He goes on to address the ever present problem of nomenclature. The term *rusyn* and its adjective *rus'kij*, he says, were generic terms that took on a political coloration only in the mid-nineteenth century, when they were interpreted as synonyms for "Russian." Originally, says Padjak, "the term *rusyny* (*rus'kie, russkie*) was a collective form; that is, it united the following concepts: Great Russians + Belorussians + Ukrainians + Galician Rus' + Uhro-Rus'." Therefore, he implies, it is an error for Solzhenitsyn to infer affinity to Russia on the part of Rusyns simply from the name *Rus'ka* (or *Russka*) *Rada*, since the terms were used interchangeably and, in any case, referred to the East Slavs in general, not to Russia. In fact, because of the similarity of language, ethnos, and tradition that existed between Rusyns and the developing Ukrainian nationality, the growth of Ukrainian identity was "completely logical." To credit Austria for this development, says Padjak, is a distortion of the truth. On the other hand, Padjak credits the Habsburg empire for tearing the Rusyn population away from East Slavic cultural processes and propagating "Ruthenianism."

Given the "logical" evolution toward Ukrainian national identity ("dynamic" in Galicia and "slower" in Subcarpathian Rus'), Padjak goes on to offer an explanation for the persistence of the Russophile orientation, especially its predominance in the Rusyn national awakening of the mid-nineteenth century. The attraction to Russia, he says, was due to the authority of the Russian empire in Europe at that time and the "hope it engendered in Slavic hearts for liberation from the Habsburg yoke." He concedes: "There was much that was positive in this union of Russians (*russkie*) with Rusyns (*rus'kie*)," though he mentions only the main drawback, that is, the linguistic arguments that resulted from the Russophile promotion of the Russian language. He concludes that the Rusyns' "rejection" of Russian in the twentieth century and their "growing interest in Ukrainian" was on the whole a natural and positive phenomenon, not a result of the intrigues of pan-Ukrainian separatists, as Solzhenitsyn would have it.

Finally, Padjak repeats his skepticism of Slavic unity, or as he calls it, Solzhenitsyn's "pretty theory of a unified Rus'." While he concedes its naive appeal, he warns: "Just do not forget the history of the Russian empire, where ideas of centralization and unification, in themselves innocent and humane, which arose in the hearts of the Russian intelligentsia, believers in all-conquering good, have been suddenly transformed by military and imperialist means into grounds for expansionist schemes." Padjak acknowledges that Solzhenitsyn does not pretend to be a professional politician,

and he likens the author's spiritual concerns about Russia to those of earlier Russian writers, where the well-intentioned goal of "calling forth the spirit of Kievan Rus' " led to negative consequences for national minorities. He recalls the poet Fëdor Tjutčev's approval of Russian interference in the Hungarian revolution of 1848 "under the pretext of defending Austrian Slavs," and, without naming him, Padjak reproves the Russian national poet Alexander Pushkin. In his poem, "To the Slanderers of Russia," written in response to European criticism of Russia's suppression of the 1831 Polish uprising, Pushkin had asked: "Should not the Slavic streams flow together in the Russian sea?" But why, asks Padjak, must it be the *Russian* sea?

To be sure, Solzhenitsyn might have been more circumspect in his use of words, though it is doubtful that Ukrainian nationalists would be more receptive to any sort of Slavic union. From the Rusyn point of view, Solzhenitsyn's concept and the hostile response it has received are interesting in that they echo the historical debates between Russophiles and Ukrainophiles over national identity. While Padjak is correct in criticizing Solzhenitsyn's comments on Carpatho-Rusyns as over-simplified, his own analysis of Rusyn national identity is no less schematic, and plainly one-sided. He does not distinguish Rusyns from Ukrainians, but does insist on the distinction between Ukrainians and Russians. Extremely sensitive to the threat of Russification wherever the Ukrainian culture and language are concerned, he expressed disbelief at Solzhenitsyn's caution that forcible Ukrainianization can also be a significant concern.

In the wake of the recent revival of Rusyn organization in Czechoslovakia and Soviet Transcarpathia, Solzhenitsyn's comments and the response to them draw attention to some unresolved issues in Carpatho-Rusyn history, issues that are no more easily resolved today than in the past. Padjak's conclusion is to rebuild Russia based on the equal cooperation of three sovereign republics. Solzhenitsyn, an artist rather than a politician, distrusts legalities and appeals to morality, especially in reference to the smaller national groups. "Every nation, great and small, is an inimitable effect of the Divine Plan. Rephrasing the Christian commandment, Vladimir Solov'ëv wrote: 'Love every nation as thine own'." The debate stimulated by Solzhenitsyn's brochure will surely continue.

Elaine Rusinko
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS 1986

With this issue we being a new year in our on-going survey of recent publications. These are from 1986 and are listed alphabetically. Many are published in eastern Europe and are difficult to obtain, but most can be found in research libraries of major universities (California at Berkeley, Harvard, Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Indiana, Toronto, Yale) or in institutions like the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, and Cleveland Public Library. Although these places allow limited access, do note that many local libraries can obtain these works upon request through Interlibrary Loan. Titles which can be purchased will be designated as such. —Editor

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Gustavsson, Sven. "Ruski Kerestur—den rusinska byn" (Ruski Krstur—A Rusyn Village), in Sven Gustavsson and Ingvar Svanberg. *Jugoslavien i April 1984: rapport från en multietnisk resa tell Jugoslavien*. Uppsala Multiethnic Papers, Vol. VI. Uppsala: Uppsala University Faculty of Arts Centre for Multiethnic Research, 1986, pp. 155-167.

OUR FRONT COVER

"Invitation to a Wedding," graphic print by Mykola Shelest.

THE BETHLEHEM PLAY: USHERING IN A SEASON OF HOPE

In December 1990, both Orthodox and Byzantine Rite Catholic Christians in the Greater Pittsburgh area shared together their common Carpatho-Rusyn cultural heritage by attending the third annual series of performances of the Bethlehem Play (*Viflejemska ihra*) offered by the students of St. Nicholas Byzantine Rite Catholic School in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. The play was presented in the spirit of peace and hope, in accord with the opening of the Office of Great Complines for Christmas which reads: "Offer a sacrifice of righteousness, and hope in the Lord. . . . In peace I will lay me down to sleep, for You, O Lord, have made me dwell in hope." (Psalm 4, v.6, 9)

The Bethlehem Play is sometimes called the *Jasličkari* Play. The *jasličkari* are the shepherds who visited Christ's manger or *jasli*, and are the major participants in the play. For the past three years, the play has been performed as a part of the St. Nicholas Parish Day Dinner. The performance of the play revives a Carpatho-Rusyn tradition last seen regularly about fifty years ago at the parish. At this year's first performance, on December 8, over three hundred people were in attendance. Included among them was the Reverend John Bilock, Auxiliary Bishop of the Byzantine Rite Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. The following Wednesday, 200 students from St. John's Byzantine Catholic Cathedral School in Munhall, Pennsylvania, and St. Mary's Polish Roman Catholic School in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, saw the performance. Finally, on December 15, the students performed the play at the St. Nicholas Day Banquet held at St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Homestead, Pennsylvania. The audience of over 250 people included the Reverend Nicholas Smisko, Bishop of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, Johnstown Diocese.

In past years this medieval morality play was taught by the cantors of many Byzantine Rite and Orthodox churches. A handful of parishioners, as the *jasličkari*, would go from house to house, performing the play. They re-enacted how a group of Carpatho-Rusyn shepherds, visiting the manger of the Christ child, came to grips both with the mystery of Christ's birth and their own human failings. Clearly, the play was an integral part of parish education. Somehow, for the last fifty years, this valuable cultural tradition known in so many Orthodox and Byzantine Rite Catholic parishes, was lost.

Now, after ten years of research, a cantor and musician from Pittsburgh, Jerry Jumba, has revived the play and for the past three years has directed its performances. Tapping archival sources, as well as the living memory of master cantors and others who recall the play, Mr. Jumba has reconstructed the songs and script both in Rusyn and in English, as well as the costumes and actions of the participants. The play recognizes no barriers between Byzantine Rite and Orthodox Christians, and this year was welcomed equally as warmly by audiences representing the clergy and faithful from both denominations of Carpatho-Rusyns.

It is difficult to describe the emotions felt at these performances. The older parishioners in the audiences sang along with the children, first softly, and then with confidence, love, and devotion to their cultural heritage. There were tears, including my own, as I recalled seeing pictures of my father in a Bethlehem Play from fifty years ago. Bishop Bilock, himself a veteran *jasličkari* performer who played many of the characters in the play, saw the performance this year for the second time. He rose and stated his desire to speak to the audience briefly before the play began because last year, he said, he was so overcome by the end of the play that he could not find the words to express the gratitude to the performers. The Reverend Stephen Veselenak, O.S.B., pastor of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic parish, attended the performance at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church. Commenting afterwards, he said that he was impressed when the people started to sing along with the children "Nebo i zemlja" (Heaven and earth) and the beloved hymn to St. Nicholas, "O kto, kto Nikolaja ljubit' " (Oh, who loves Nicholas). "This unprecedented sharing of our common Carpatho-Rusyn heritage," Father Stephen added, "truly gave the saint's day a new and special meaning."

Bishop Nicholas Smisko summed up the experience in his remarks to the children in the play after the performance in Homestead. "You sang with such fervor, and so beautifully . . . and with so much energy that you certainly did not exhaust us old people, but in fact, you just made us feel a part

Students of St. Nicholas Byzantine Rite Catholic School in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, performing the Bethlehem Play.

of you. This is a very fine presentation, reminding us all of our common roots, of that which was once a part of us a long time ago—and somehow brought back to life again—reminding us to recall what was, and what is, and perhaps what could be. We got your message that Christ is born. We got your message of how our ancestors and grandparents knew how to welcome the season of Christmas. The whole Gospel evolved from this humble birth which gave us the meaning of Christmas. It was certainly brought to us in a real drama by you this evening. The angels and shepherds went about in the villages—as you have done here—bringing the message that Christ was born."

The students who saw the play were also highly impressed, stating that they had never seen a better play about Christmas. Their comments especially should convince us that this long-lost tradition needs to be revived and promoted. Individuals and parishes interested in preparing the play for this year's St. Nicholas Day are invited to order a videotape of the performance from St. Nicholas School. The cost of the video is $35.00, which includes postage and handling. The complete Bethlehem Play script and carol text rehearsal sheets are available for $5.00. A set of carol music with the text is also available for an additional $5.00. For further information or to request an order, send a check payable to: "St. Nicholas School," 407 Shaw Avenue, McKeesport, Pennsylvania 15132. Attn: Bethlehem Play.

Andrew G. Kovaly
McKeesport, Pennsylvania

RECENT EVENTS

Toronto, Ontario. On October 19-21, 1990, the Third Congress of Carpatho-Ukrainians in the Diaspora took place in Toronto. The congress grew out of the meeting of post-World War II Ukrainian-oriented émigrés held in McKean, Pennsylvania, on July 13-15 (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1990, p. 6). The Toronto congress was under the chairmanship of Professor Vasyl Markus (Loyola University, Chicago). Its participants included as many, if not more, Ukrainian Americans and Canadians from Galicia than from the Carpatho-Ukraine (Subcarpathian Rus').

The congress criticized the Rusyn national revival in the homeland, which was described as little more than the "Rusyn Affair," and it considered all efforts to create a Rusyn nationality and to create a Rusyn literary language as "artificial and unscholarly." The congress was particularly critical of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Užhorod, the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyns'ka Obroda) in Medzilaborce, and their "supporters" in the West, all of whom were described as acting against the "natural unity" of the Ukrainian homeland, of which Transcarpathia must remain an integral part. (Cited from the Congress resolutions published in *Novyj šljach* [Toronto], December 22-29, 1990, pp. 10-15.).

Among the honored guests at the Third Congress of Carpatho-Ukrainians in the Diaspora was Dr. Pavlo Kampov, who until his release last year from a concentration camp had the dubious distinction of being the longest held (eighteen years) political prisoner from the Soviet Ukraine. Kampov's views of the Toronto congress were sent to the Ukrainian press in North America and Europe. All, however, refused to publish his "alternative" description of the Toronto congress.

According to Kampov, "only those persons who emigrated in the 1940s from Subcarpathian Rus', from Carpatho-Ukraine . . . . and who consider themselves Ukrainians gathered in Toronto." "In his lecture, 'Rusynism: Reality and Fiction', Professor Markus began by saying that he did not pretend that his remarks were to be completely objective." According to Markus, "the fact that the indigenous population of Transcarpathia has returned to calling itself Rusyn is an indication of a lack of awareness of history and universal developments." Markus also stated that "the Rusyn movement is inspired from Moscow, the United States, and Canada, and he, in particular . . . attacked Professor Paul Magocsi of the University of Toronto." In contrast, Kampov described Magocsi as the same person who has "studied intensively the Rusyn question in the United States, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and, of course, Transcarpathia, the central homeland of the Rusyns. One should not accuse, but thank Magocsi for his efforts." "The Congress judged positively the fact that Rusyns in Yugoslavia are a distinct nationality. . . . but it did not want even to hear about the idea that Rusyns might exist in the Transcarpathian homeland or in the United States. The national revival of Rusyns in America was considered to be hostile and it would be better if they simply became completely Americanized." "The Congress even judged in a negative manner the Byzantine Catholic Ruthenian Church in the United States under Archbishop Kocisko, because that church supposedly is a source of Rusynism." (Cited from *Novyny Zakarpattja* [Užhorod], January 22, 1991, p. 5).

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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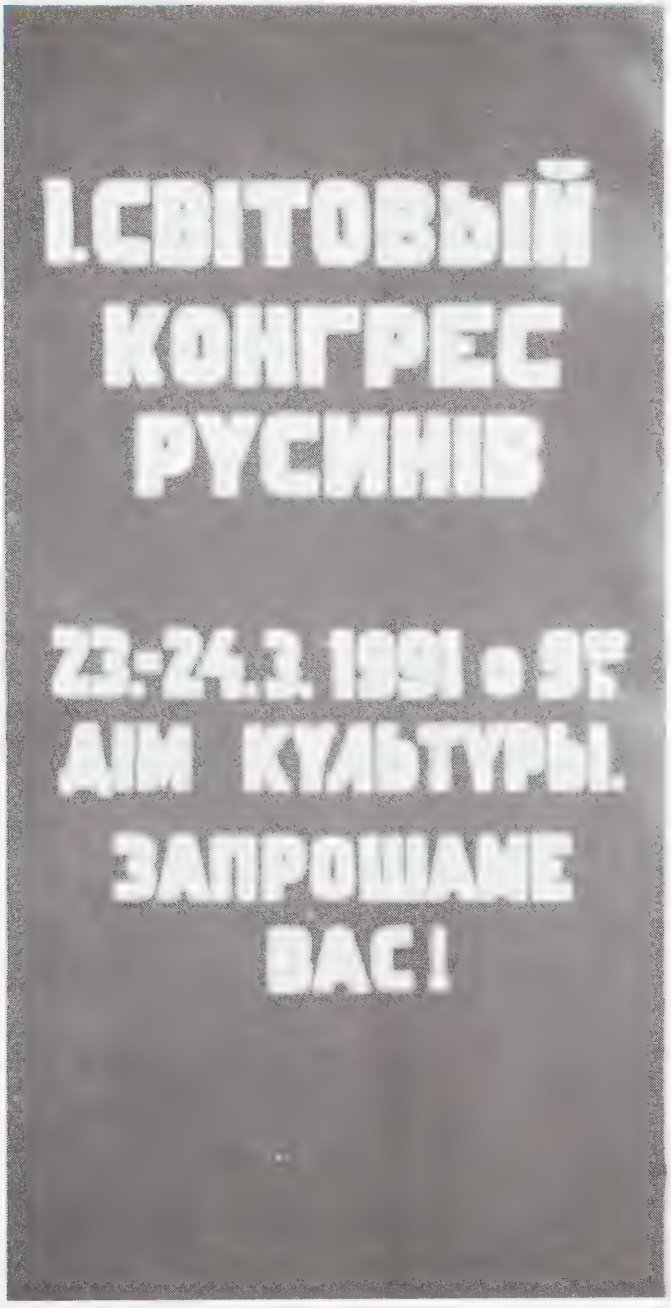
A Forum on Carpatho Rusyn Ethnic Heritage



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FROM THE EDITOR

This past year the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center continued its Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship series with the publication of *The Rusyns* by Alexander Bonkáló. The author was by training a Slavic philologist and much of his research and writing were devoted particularly to the study of the Rusyns. Like other volumes planned for our series, Bonkáló's *Rusyns* has never before been available in English. In addition, it is a work bound to provoke questions, for it presents the history of the Rusyns from a Hungarian national point of view.

Of the hundreds of readers who ordered the volume, a few responded in writing to the editor of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* and the C-RRC. Two of the responses were especially strong in their negative reaction to the book. James Prizant, who has been studying the history of Subcarpathian Rus' for several years, said in his brief note that he has found the C-RRC's publications "to be a most helpful and fair-minded source of information." With regard to *The Rusyns*, however, he added that "had I any inkling of the viscerally anti-democratic, pro-fascist sympathies expressed by its author, I would not have spent one cent of my money to buy this book."

Florence Orris wrote a much lengthier letter, printed here in full, which may express the feelings of many Rusyn Americans in response to the viewpoint Bonkáló's study espouses.

Dear Editor:

Naši bedni l'udi! The expression used so often by my father, Stephen Pusti, certainly applies to the book I have just completed, *The Rusyns*, written by Alexander Bonkáló. This book, so tragically slanted, was difficult to read with page after page of untruths and excuses justifying the treatment of the Rusyn people by the Hungarians in the past. After reading this book, I considered disposing of it, but when I looked at the title, *The Rusyns*, my heart melted and I placed it on my bookshelf.

We ask ourselves, "Who loves us?," and the answer must be that "We do." We must love ourselves enough to stand in the truth that we are not the slave of another nationality to be fragmented with their ways and eventually destroyed. Certainly this is the ultimate goal of these outsiders.

Outside nationalities are so well described for us in the book *The Shaping of a National Identity*, written by Paul R. Magocsi, and they have for centuries pulled us apart. We Rusyns are pulled at from all directions just like the false mother in Holy Scripture who would have allowed the baby to be cut in half rather than let the rightful mother have the child. Strangers have made the same decision about us.

How wonderful it would have been to have had a friend in times past who would have helped us develop as a unified people. This never happened, so let us have the courage to face this reality and go on. As Rusyn Americans we are not chained to the past so that we must willingly bow before Ukrainians, Slovaks, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, or any other group that might wish to assimilate us. With willing hearts let us attempt to inspire our Rusyn people in Europe and America to walk only in the truth and to begin anew.

The C-RRC shares the basic views of both James and Florence. In the introduction to *The Rusyns*, the editors of the series state: "Admittedly, we found it difficult to accept the strongly anti-Czechoslovak tone in the chapters dealing with recent historical events and with certain of Bonkáló's judgments concerning early Rusyn colonization and subsequent cultural developments." The editors then go on to describe those features of the study which, from the C-RRC's point of view, "provide a wealth of invaluable information" and make the book unique and essential to those who wish to learn more about Rusyns. The flyer announcing the book also lists these features, noting that the bulk of the volume is, in fact, not necessarily linked to the Hungarian national point of view. The volume does provide an informative "analysis of the differing Rusyn ethnographic groups and their style of life, a survey of Rusyn literature, a discussion of Rusyn folk poetry and customs, and an outline of Greek Catholic and Orthodox religious history."

At the same time, the editors make clear in the book's introduction that the Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship series will continue to publish a variety of works that may favor "a particular national (pro-Russian, pro-Rusyn, pro-Ukrainian), or political (pro-Czechoslovak, pro-Hungarian, pro-Soviet), or ideological (pro-Democratic, pro-Communist, pro-Christian) stance," but that this "does not in any way reflect the policy or orientation of the C-RRC." We feel "that the availability in English of many scholarly studies of varied ideological persuasions is the best way to improve our understanding and appreciation of Carpatho-Rusyn culture." These last statements are found not only in the introduction to the Bonkáló book, but also in the introduction to the first book in our series, *Rusyn Easter Eggs from Eastern Slovakia*, published in 1987. They will reappear in each of our volumes.

We must admit that our history is anything but dull. The political, ideological, cultural, religious, and linguistic forces operative in our homeland over the past centuries have often led to controversy and struggle as our people sought to express their views and give voice to their identity. We have been a much-claimed people, and our neighbors have frequently had ideas about our destiny which we have not shared.

It is nothing new, then, that there should be a Hungarian or Ukrainian or Russian point of view about Rusyns which radically differ one from the other and which appear "so tragically slanted," as Florence has observed. But in order to truly know ourselves, we must also see ourselves as others see us. Our measure of maturity as a people corresponds to our ability to explore a variety of views about ourselves without being daunted by them.

THOMAS BELL (1903-1961)

The American author and dramatist, Thomas Bell, was born on March 7, 1903, in Braddock, Pennsylvania. By the time of his death less than six decades later, he had become a writer known throughout the world through works translated into many languages. Few people are aware, however, that his father Mychal Belejčak, was a Rusyn from the village of Vyšnij Tvarožec (Šariš county) in the Prešov Region of northeastern Czechoslovakia. The family of his mother, Marija Kračun, also came from the same area. Mychal Belejčak emigrated to the United States in 1890. He married, worked in the mines, and then in the steel factories of Pennsylvania until he died in 1914 at the young age of thirty-nine.

Following the death of his father, Thomas Belejčak, the oldest of four children, had to leave school in order to help support the family. He began working in a glass company, then became an apprentice electrician before moving on to the furnaces in a steel mill in Braddock, Pennsylvania. In 1922, at the age of nineteen, he went to New York City and before long became a sailor. His seaman's "career" ended after two voyages, and he returned to New York where he worked in a bookstore and began to write more intensively in his spare time. From then on he was known by the pseudonym he had used since the inception of his literary career, Thomas Bell, an abbreviation of Belejčak. Following the example of Jack London, Bell wrote from personal experience. Coming as he did from a poor working-class background, most of his works demonstrate a close relationship with the so-called "left proletarian literature." Common people, predominantly immigrants from "the old country," served as the main characters in his novels and dramas.

His first novel, *The Breed of Basil* (1930), was a romantic adventure that did not meet with success. His subsequent novels, however, drew on the life of the immigrant experience he knew so well. Such themes dominated his next three novels: his partially autobiographical, *The Second Prince* (1935), *All Brides Are Beautiful* (1936), and *There Comes a Time* (1946). It was the overwhelming success of *All Brides Are Beautiful* that prompted MGM studios to invite Bell to Hollywood in order to work as a script writer. After less than a year, however, he became disillusioned with the movie world and returned to New York City. This did not deter the studios from recognizing a box-office hit, and in 1946, RKO made *All Brides Are Beautiful* into a film entitled "From This Day Forward," starring Joan Fontaine.

Bell's fourth novel, *Out of This Furnace* (1941), was his masterpiece. It chronicles the saga of three Slovak and Rusyn generations of immigrants from his parents' native Šariš county. The story is, in fact, the saga of his own family. In the 1960s, the novel was dramatized as "Dva svity" (Two Worlds) for Slovak Television. As a result of this film and his own statements, Slovaks consider Bell to be an American writer of Slovak heritage, even though his father's origins are in Vyšnij Tvarožec, a Rusyn village. In the end, Bell was to be best remembered for his autobiographical composition, *In the Midst of Life (1961)*, written during the last months of life in diary form by an individual stricken with cancer and anticipating death.

We Rusyns are often unaware of the extent of our people's fame. In recent years, much has been written about the artist Andy Warhol, whose parents were also Rusyns from the

Prešov Region. Like Warhol, Thomas Bell had a distinguished career in American cultural circles. In Medzilaborce, the Andy Warhol Society has already been founded and work has begun on a museum in the artist's honor. At the very least it would be worth considering a memorial plaque or a museum room in Vyšnij Tvarožec, the native village of Thomas Bell's father.

But prior to this, it is necessary to popularize his works, which are practically unknown among Rusyns in the European homeland. Recently, we learned that on the initiative of Marija Gmyterova (a native of Vyšnij Tvarožec), the district center for education in Bardejov is preparing for publication an introductory pamphlet devoted to Thomas Bell. It is hoped that this publication will herald the beginning of a flourishing interest in our countryman. His relatives, the Belejčaks, continue to live in Vyšnij Tvarožec most likely preserving memories of their ancestor who emigrated to America nearly a century ago.

Mykola Mušynka
Prešov, Czechoslovakia

OUR FRONT COVER

Poster in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia, announcing the First World Congress of Rusyns, March 23-24, 1991, 9:00 a.m., at the Cultural Center. All are invited.

WHO BETRAYED SUBCARPATHIAN RUS'? WHO WILL HELP THE TRANSCARPATHIAN UKRAINE?

In the wake of the enormous political changes that have occurred in East Central Europe since the revolution of 1989, many circles in Czechoslovakia have renewed their interest in Subcarpathian Rus'. That territory had been part of Czechoslovakia between 1919 and 1939; it was annexed by Hungary in 1939; and then it was incorporated as the Transcarpathian oblast into the Soviet Ukraine in 1945. A Slovak journalist Eva Čobejová prepared the following report and interviews with two leading Rusyn cultural activists, one from Czechoslovakia, the other from Soviet Transcarpathia. The article originally appeared in the Slovak-language newspaper, Smena na nedel'u *(Bratislava), November 30, 1990.*—Editor

When I was returning at the end of July from Subcarpathian Rus', which already for forty-five years has been called the Transcarpathian Ukraine, I had no doubts about the fact that in that country the feeling of belonging to Czechoslovakia has remained constantly strong. Yet I preferred not to write about it. I dared only to call attention to the fact that under the Carpathians beyond our border [in Soviet Transcarpathia] there still lived a Slovak minority which we have ignored for forty-five years and have calmly left at the mercy of Ukrainianization or Russification. Somewhat later the president of the Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, upon his return from a trip to the former Subcarpathian Rus', did not hesitate to announce the following:

"We defend the opinion that Subcarpathian Rus' is still now a part of the Czechoslovak Republic . . . The Republicans demand the annulment of all acts which were adopted on the territory of Subcarpathian Rus' from the year 1938, that is, from its separation from Czechoslovakia."

Dr. Sladek was not the only one thinking about Subcarpathian Rus'. At the end of October in Prague, members of the Society of Friends of Subcarpathian Rus', which was officially registered by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Republic, came together for their first general assembly. Almost 200 people gathered in Prague. Some were Rusyns who had emigrated from Subcarpathian Rus', and some were Czechs who had worked there at some point or who had been born and raised there. They issued a proclamation, which among other things stated the following:

"In accordance with the building of the great democratic family of European peoples and states, freedom belongs also to the people of Subcarpathian Rus' who in a legal sense never ceased being a part of the Czechoslovak Republic. The right to freedom does not end at the border just beyond Košice and Prešov. All the peoples of Europe have the right to democracy and a free life, and this includes Subcarpathian Rus', whose people also acknowledge the democratic message of the Czechoslovak Republic."

Six days after this announcement, an interesting piece of news appeared in the papers: The Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, founded in February 1990 in Užhorod, sent an appeal to Mikhail Gorbachev and to the Ukrainian parliament to transform the Transcarpathian oblast of the Ukrainian SSR into an autonomous republic of Subcarpathian Rus'. Besides this, the Society appealed to the United Nations to redress Stalin's liquidation of the autonomous Subcarpathian Rus' and the Rusyn people as a violation of international treaties. The question of Subcarpathian Rus'—whether we want to admit it or not—has again become urgent.

We Slovaks also know from our own personal experience that the history of Central Europe has not been favorable to small nations, particularly to the Slavic peoples. I might be so bold as to stress that while Slovak history has been marked with a constant struggle for survival, it has nevertheless been a happier history than Rusyn history. Here are some small comparisons: the Slovak language was codified in 1843 and the official standard language from 1918 (although it was lacking grammatical rules). A literary form of the Rusyn language has practically vanished. There is no official language, the language is not taught in schools, and no literature has been written in it, although there is still a living language used by Rusyns. (In 1937, a grammar of the Rusyn language was published, but shortly afterwards the development of Rusyn culture came to a halt.) Yet the Rusyns have not experienced the fate of the Lusatian Sorbs or the Polabian Slavs. Approximately 800,000 people still acknowledge that they are Rusyns, but there are still many others as well.

Subcarpathian Rus', like Slovakia, belonged to Hungary from the eleventh century to 1918. In October 1918, a representative of the Subcarpathian Rusyns signed a declaration in Philadelphia proclaiming freedom for the Central European peoples. In Subcarpathian Rus' at that time, a polemic was current whether to establish an independent state, to strive for unity with the Ukraine or Hungary, or to join with the Czechoslovak Republic. The idea of joining with the Czechoslovak Republic triumphed. The peace treaties of Saint-Germain and the Trianon treaty, as well as the Czechoslovak constitution all acknowledged this union. Thus began a 20-year cohabitation which Communist historians later would designate as the period when Czech capitalists plundered Subcarpathian Rus' and subjected its people to bondage and poverty. Witnesses from Subcarpathian Rus', however, nostalgically recall these years when they were "under the Czechs" and admire that everything was done "by the authority of the Czechs" for the development of Subcarpathia.

In May 1934, the minister of foreign affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic, Dr. Beneš, travelled around Subcarpathian Rus' and self-assuredly announced before the Rusyns: The destiny of Subcarpathian Rus' has been decided for all time. Czechoslovakia will never surrender Subcarpathian Rus'. We will never allow any border revision and will protect Subcarpathian Rus' with our bodies and our blood, when and if this should be necessary." Not even six years passed before Dr. Beneš himself doubted the future of Subcarpathian Rus' and said that after the war we would not be able to prevent the Soviet Union from demanding that Subcarpathian Rus' should be transferred to the Ukraine. Nor can we ignore the years 1938 and 1939 when Subcarpathian Rus' was seeking autonomy, but had little time to enjoy it. Beginning already October 9, 1938, there was fighting in Subcarpathian Rus' against Hungarian and Polish terrorist groups, and the Czechoslovak army suffered significant losses. From March 14, 1939, the army fought with Horthy's military detachments, and the last Czechoslovak soldier left Subcarpathian Rus' by March 18, 1939. It is said that Czechoslovakia submitted to the Germans without a single shot being fired. But this is not the case with regard to Subcarpathian Rus' and the soldiers who served there.

After the occupation of Subcarpathian Rus' by Hungary, many Rusyns fled eastward to the Soviet Union where they hoped to escape fascism. Instead, they "escaped" to the Soviet gulag. It is not suprising that later when the Czechoslovak military unit arose in the Soviet Union, many Rusyns volunteered for it.

When in the autumn of 1944, a delegation to the Czechoslovak government was elected in Subcarpathian Rus', the Soviet military command there denounced it. Then in Mukačevo a congress of selected members of local national councils was immediately organized. Whether those present wanted to or not, they accepted a proclamation on November 26, 1944, declaring the union of the Transcarpthian Ukraine with the Soviet Ukraine. In June 1945, Czechoslovakia reluctantly signed an agreement in Moscow concerning the union of the Transcarpathian Ukraine and the Ukrainian SSR.

Thus Stalin's strategic goal, formulated long before, was accomplished—to go as far as the Carpathians and to establish a strong military presence there. What did this mean for Rusyns? The forced evacuation of up to 20,000 Rusyns, largely intelligentsia, to far corners of the Soviet Union. It also meant Ukrainianization, as well as an influx of Russians and Ukrainians to towns and villages traditionally populated by Rusyns. Those who could left for Czechoslovakia or Hungary, and many emigrated even further.

For Subcarpathian Rus' Gorbachev's perestroika has meant first a revitalization of religious life. Greek Catholics have begun to demand the return of their churches which were taken over by the Orthodox Church. Roman Catholics have begun to repair their churches and to take their children there so that they not forget their mother tongue. The Roman Catholic religious community is made up largely of Hungarians, Germans, and also Slovaks in their eleven Slovak parishes. In the wake of the religious awakening has come the national awakening. In February [1990] the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns was founded in Užhorod. The society intends to fight for the recognition of the Rusyn nationality, for the renewal of the Rusyn language and culture, and also for autonomy. The society has already taken the first steps in this direction.

For Rusyns the greatest danger today is not so much the Kremlin, but moreso the aroused national feelings of the Ukrainians and their national movement *Rukh*. The Ukraine does not want to surrender its relatively well-developed western segment, Subcarpathia. For the Ukrainians, this is the "rich West," while for us it is the "poor East." Ukrainian nationalism can threaten the national reawakening of the Rusyns if passion rather than reason takes over.

How should Czechoslovakia conduct itself in this situation? Does it have any right at all to interfere in the "internal affairs" of the Soviet Union? Should it lay claim to its former territory, a region of 12.8 thousand square kilometers with over 1,200,000 inhabitants where the majority are Rusyns, but about a third are Russians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Romanians, Germans, and other peoples? There are also economic concerns here. For instance the possibility of raising the standard of living at whatever cost is a matter which for the inhabitants of this area could outweigh all other arguments in any eventual referendum.

So how shall we, [Czechs and Slovaks], conduct ourselves toward Subcarpthian Rus' and the Subcarpthian Rusyns? With regard to the discussion about Subcarpathian Rus' we asked Ivan Bicko, a representative of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, an organization founded in March [1990] in Medzilaborce, and Volodymyr Fedynyšynec, a representative of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, founded in Užhorod in February 1990.

[Here follows the interview with Ivan Bicko.]

According to you, should Czechoslovakia still have an interest in the former Subcarpathian Rus'?

I think that it is precisely Slovakia which ought to deal with the territory of the former Subcarpathian Rus' because Slovaks still live there. We should concern ourselves with the Slovaks living in Trancarpathia with the same vehemence that we concern ourselves with fellow countrymen living in Hungary. So far I haven't seen any such interest, which I explain as part of a general caution toward a large neighbor inherited from the Communists. We don't want to acknowledge that after its religious awakening, the population of Subcarpthian Rus' has begun also to become aware of its nationality.

How should we have conducted ourselves toward the Rusyn people who make up the majority of the inhabitants of the former Subcarpathian Rus'?

Simply as to a people who were part of the First Czechoslovak Republic and who were never unfaithful to it. To this day Rusyns possess a consciousness of the Czechoslovak Republic. Buildings constructed during the Czechoslovak Republic, for instance, are the most beautiful in Subcarpathia. These are actually monuments of that time period, and the people say about them: "this was built by the Czechs." The people of Subcarpthian Rus' clearly felt the Czech cultural expansion. Rusyns from Užhorod and the surrounding area had an even better notion of Slovaks whom they frequently encountered. Thus, both Czechs and Slovaks could renew their ties with Rusyns and could recognize that the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus' to the Soviet Union was accomplished under conditions which were not in accord with international law. This was clearly a Communist affair—Stalinist politics—and from the Czechoslovak side an affair of an incompetent leader, Dr. Beneš, who succumbed rather than taking control of the situation.

At the present time how should we show interest in the situation of people living under the Carpathians on Soviet territory?

We ought to act as does Hungary which has shown a constant interest in the Hungarian minority in that area. In order not to complicate matters thus far, we ought to take steps which can be taken now. For instance, we should try to represent ourselves in Subcarpathian Rus' by means of television broadcasts. We ought to establish Czechoslovak cultural centers in that region and find people there who still have a tie with Czechoslovakia and who could become enthusiastic disseminators of information about the Czechoslovak Federated Republic. I think that it is necessary to establish an active work center in the Czechoslovak consulate in Kiev with a view to encouraging intensive contacts between the residents of Subcarpathian Rus' and Czechoslovakia. And what is most essential: our government must establish the conditions for the expansion of Slovak and Czech en-

trepreneurs, especially those involved in joint ventures with Western firms. It would be good if we could extend our activity into Subcarpathian Rus'. For Rusyns this would strengthen enormously their feelings of belonging and their solidarity with Central Europe. Thus we could aid the return of the people of Subcarpathian Rus' to the Central European context from which they were forcefully torn.

How might we assess historical events relating to the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus' by the USSR? Is it time to demand a reconsideration of these events?

In order to prevent the situation from becoming politically tense, and while the people there haven't yet expressed themselves on the issue, an independent historian ought to be asked to investigate the circumstances of the annexation. For Rusyns, for instance, the fact that the agreement with the Soviet Union was signed by [Czechoslovakia's Communist foreign minister] Vlado Clementis is not relevant. (For Slovaks he might be a hero because he later became a victim of his own comrades.) It is also necessary to investigate what role in this matter was played by the Slovak National Council in January 1945, and more specifically its delegation for the liberation of lands inasmuch as it was authorized to offer that land to Stalin. (It did this, in fact, but from Stalin it earned the response that this was improper and that the people themselves should have the opportunity to express their wishes.) Perhaps with this the Slovak National Council delegation wanted to ensure that Slovakia not be injured by the fact that during the war it was an ally of German. I don't know precisely the inner motives of these gentlemen, but for Rusyns this was treason. Historians ought now to be the ones to take over this investigation.

Ivan Bicko

Volodymyr Fedynyšynec

[Here follows the interview with Volodymyr Fedynyšynec.]

Does your organization have cultural or political goals?

First and foremost we have cultural goals, but at times we also touch on political questions. We are for the autonomy of Subcarpathian Rus'. Striving for autonomy ought to be the first step, and in time we could become an independent Slavic state—with the understanding that we would be good neighbors to Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Poles. This is my conception of Rusynism, taking into account that we Rusyns are not Ukrainians, nor are we Slovaks, Czechs, or Poles. We are a separate Slavic people, one of the oldest. The first reference to Rusyns, as far as I know, is from the first centuries of our era. We were, in fact, a very stabilized group at that time.

What is the present condition of the Rusyn language? Will it be taught again in the schools?

It probably will be taught—if we have autonomy. At present I am working on grammars, dictionaries, and an orthography for the Rusyn language. We don't have a literature in Rusyn, but Rusyn is still a living language. We need scholarly investigation of the language so that we can establish the rules of the Rusyn language. When this is done, education in Rusyn will be possible. This is necessary, especially if we want to be an independent state.

What is your opinion about those voices from Subcarpathian Rus' that are calling for its return to the Czechoslovak Federated Republic?

In general this wouldn't be bad.

At present what help do you anticipate from Czechoslovakia?

Moral support and some favorable words. More concretely? Joint historical research on the history of Subcarpathia, for example. Until now there has not been a truthfully and comprehensively written history. We have only partial works from the past which, however, can't be used as a basis for study nor as any final outcome. We need new historical research without political distortions.

Is there now discord between Rusyns and Ukrainians in former Subcarpathian Rus'?

Absolutely not. Ukrainians have united in *Rukh* and Rusyns have now begun to organize themselves. It's too bad that up to now there has not been the necessary unity or a feeling of solidarity. But I think that by means of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns we will be successful and that Rusyns who have been calling themselves Ukrainians will return to us.

How many members does the society have?

It's hard to say, but it continues to be small. We have several thousands, but there are 800,000 Rusyns in Subcarpathia.

Translated by Patricia A. Krafcik

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

The *Carpatho-Rusyn American* (ISSN 0749-9213) is a quarterly publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc., a non-profit cultural organization whose purpose is to promote knowledge about all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture through the publication and distribution of scholarly and educational material about the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage in Europe and America.

General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

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REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On March 19, 1991, just three days before the international scholary seminar on traditional Rusyn culture (see RECENT EVENTS in this issue of the *C-RA*), the recently-established Scholarly Society (Naukove Tovarystvo) of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia (SRUCH) felt it necessary to convene a "seminar before the seminar" in order to be prepared for the public discussion of the Rusyn question. Headed by the historian, Dr. Ivan Vanat, the pro-Ukrainian Prešov intelligentsia held a round-table discussion which criticized all aspects of the Rusyn movement. Vanat went so far as to conclude that the very use of the word Rusyn is somehow a political provocation.

But not all agreed with the tenor at this "preparatory" gathering. In the words of one observer: "Those present spent two and a half hours trying to convince themselves of what they all already believed. Obviously it is easy to conduct such meetings, because there is no need to find strong arguments against people of opposing views. But, then, aren't we falling into the same kind of discussions that we regularly had at various meetings in the past?

"And, so, what was the result of this meeting? We expected that it would result in the approval (often a concrete analysis) of a convincing presentation to be given by the historian Ivan Vanat at the international seminar against the theory of Rusynism of Professor P.R. Magocsi and others who support such ideas. But this did not happen. Thus, the conclusion is that perhaps we need to learn much more before we can become participants in heated polemics and in particular draw from such polemics concrete and logical results necessary for our further work." (A. Pliška, "Pidhotovka pered seminarom," *Nove žyttja*, March 25, 1991, p. 1)

After the international seminar finally took place in Prešov on March 22, it received wide coverage in the local press. Oleksander Zozuljak, editor of *Nove žyttja*, the weekly newspaper for Czechoslovakia's Rusyn-Ukrainians, summed up his impressions the following way:

"The discussion was intense, although I did not like the 'attacks' at the seminar by certain Ukrainian-oriented scholars, who spoke out harshly against Rusynism and accused all of them of propagating political Rusynism. Is history repeating itself? Is it that we cannot live without threats? Just as in the 1950s, the threat was against Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism, so now in the 1990s they are frightening us with accusations of political Rusynism. Unfortunately, in the past, our scholars did little to provide our people with their true history, to explain to them our evolution, or to help resolve the serious problems in our national life. If their work had been good and its results positive, then perhaps they would not have to divert the public's attention with unfounded threats of political Rusynism." (*Nove žyttja*, April 2, 1991, p.1)

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On March 23, 1991, several Rusyn-language writers who came to the First World Congress of Rusyns met together to discuss their common problems. Those present were Olena Duc and Petro Trochanovskij from the Lemko Region in Poland, the Reverend František Krajnjak from the Prešov Region in Czechoslovakia, Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' and Ivan Petrovcij from Soviet Transcarpathia, and Vasyl' Petrovaj from Marijupil' in the far southeast Soviet Ukraine.

The meeting was organized by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi of the C-RRC and Ljubomir Medješi of the Rusyn Matka in Yugoslavia. The writers discussed the issue of codifying a Rusyn literary language, which each is doing for his/her region; the financial difficulties of publishing Rusyn magazines and books; and the immediate need for accessible grammars and readers for school children. In order to continue the all-important dialogue regarding a literary standard, it was agreed that a Rusyn philological congress should be convened in the near future.

A new generation of Rusyn-language writers meets for the first time: Ivan Petrovcij (Berehovo, Soviet Transcarpathia); The Reverend František Krajnjak (Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia); Olena Duc-Fajfer (Uście Gorlickie, Poland); Petro Trochanovskij (Krynica, Poland); and Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' (Užhorod, Soviet Transcarpathia). Not pictured: Vasyl' Petrovaj (Marijupil', Soviet Ukraine).

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF RUSYNS

On March 23-24, 1991, the First World Congress of Rusyns took place in Medzilaborce, a Rusyn-inhabited town of 6,000 inhabitants located in the far northeastern corner of Czechoslovakia. The gathering was a historic first, since never before have individuals and organizations from all areas where Rusyns live—Soviet Transcarpathia (historic Subcarpathian Rus'), the Prešov Region, the Lemko Region, the Vojvodina (historic Bačka), and the United States—ever come together to share their common problems and goals.

The congress was organized by the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyns'ka Obroda) at the initiative of its chairman, Dr. Vasyl' Turok from Prešov, and local activists in Medzilaborce, Dr. Mychal Turok-Heteš and Mychal Bycko. The setting was the newly-opened Cultural Center in Medzilaborce, an imposing white marble structure on the main road leading to the town. The congress was funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak government in Bratislava with assistance from discretionary funds from the federal Czechoslovak government in Prague.

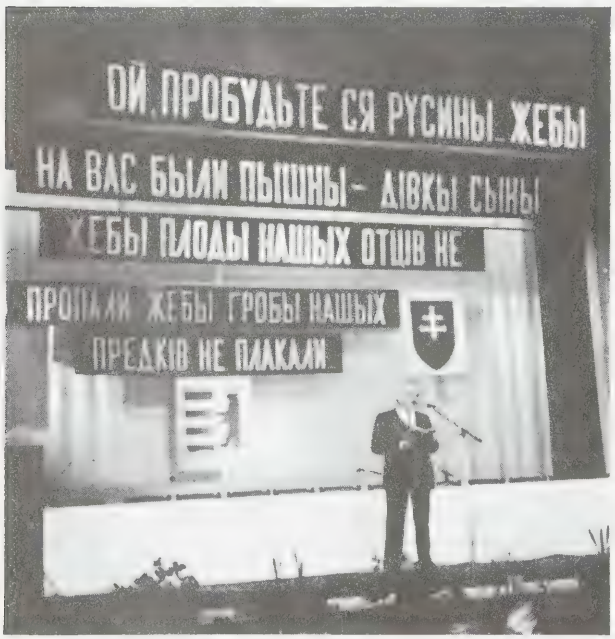
Nearly three hundred people arrived for the two-day meeting. As they entered the main hall of the Cultural Center, all were struck by the aesthetically impressive stage dominated by large banners that spelled out a verse in Rusyn from the nineteenth-century poet Aleksander Pavlovyč. Framing the banners were three colorful crests with the of-

ficial emblems of the Czechoslovak state, the Slovak Republic, and the red bear facing seven blue-and-gold stripes which had been the symbol of interwar Subcarpathian Rus' and which now serves as the symbol for all Carpatho-Rusyns, regardless where they live.

The first day of the congress began promptly at 9:00 a.m. with a male choir from the neighboring village of Njagov singing the Rusyn national anthem, "Podkarpats'ki rusyny, ostavte hlubokyj son" (Subcarpathian Rusyns, Arise from Your Deep Slumber). This was followed by a poem of Aleksander Pavlovyč recited by Jaroslav Sisak, the talented actor and director of the professional Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater (the former Ukrainian National Theater) in Prešov.

These two opening events set the tone for the rest of the congress, since they embodied what virtually everyone felt: a sense of joy and relief that after nearly half a century of wartime and totalitarian Communist repression Rusyns finally were able to gather together in a public forum and proclaim with pride their national and cultural identity. As the talented Lemko Rusyn poet Petro Trochanovskij said at the very end of the congress: "For the past two days I simply have been overwhelmed with the need to cry for joy."

The congress was chaired by Aleksander Franko, a former diplomat in the Czechoslovak foreign service. Seated at the podium were members of the presidium consisting of the chairman of each of the Rusyn organizations: Dr. Vasyl Turok, Rusyn Renaissance Society (Czechoslovakia); Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (United States); Vasyl Sočka-Boržavyn, Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Soviet Transcarpathia); Andrij Kopča, Society of Lemkos (Poland); and Ljubomir Medješi (Yugoslavia). Also on the podium were representatives from the following bodies: the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, the Advisory Commission for National Minorities to the Slovak government, the town of Medzilaborce, and the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia in Prešov.



Jaroslav Sisak, director of the professional Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater in Prešov, opens the First World Congress of Rusyns reciting a poem by the nineteenth-century Rusyn poet, Aleksander Pavlovyč. The stage is decorated above him with a verse from Pavlovyč: "Oh, awaken Rusyns/So that our daughters and sons will be proud of us,/So that the achievements of our fathers will not be lost . . . /So that the graves of our ancestors will not weep."

The key-note speech was delivered by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi of the C-RRC, who addressed the question whether Carpatho-Rusyns are a "new or revived people" (full text of his remarks will appear in a future issue of the *C-RA*). Then followed shorter statements by the chairmen of the Rusyn organizations in the presidium. In his remarks, the Chairman of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, Dr. Vasyl' Turok, summed up what many felt: "The very fact that we can speak out as a distinct national entity creates in our hearts a sense of pride and joy. We believe that everything we have received from our ancestors can now in even greater measure be passed on to our descendants, although until recently it seemed as if our generation would not live to see such joy."

For most of the rest of the congress, nearly thirty writers, teachers, and cultural activists were given an opportunity to express their concerns. All spoke in Rusyn and all in their own way demanded an end to the Ukrainian national orientation in the countries where they lived and for the official recognition of Rusyns as a distinct national minority with the right to schools and cultural organizations. The concerns were for cultural rights, and with one exception no one asked for political autonomy or any change of international boundaries.

The tone of the several speakers was summed up in the words of Vasyl' Petrovaj, a Rusyn novelist from the Prešov Region who for most of his life has resided in the far southeastern Soviet Ukraine: "We don't want anyone to try to convince us who we are! We know best who we are. We are a great people, which neither Magyarization, nor Russification, nor Ukrainianization has been able to destroy. This proves the Rusyns are a great people which only needs its freedom. And why don't they give us the right to our own nationality! Worst of all, such a situation has been created by our own fellow Slavs." More measured were the remarks of Dr. Zoreslava Mitrovka from Užhorod: "We must tell the whole world that we want to live and develop, to be ourselves, to have the right to know our own history (and not one which has been deformed in every way), and to have the right to our own language and culture. Yet at the same time we must not forget our closest Slavic brethren, the Ukrainians, whose history, language, and culture we must respect—no more but no less than our own."

The congress organizers also made provisions for a cultural program. On Saturday evening, the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater of Prešov performed in Rusyn the play "Maruška." At the end of the congress on Sunday afternoon, the theater's world famous folk ensemble, formerly known as the Duklia Ukrainian Ensemble and now simply as PUL'S, gave an hour-long performance of its most popular Rusyn songs and dances. The ensemble closed its program and the congress by leading the audience in singing the "second" national anthem—"Ja rusyn byl, jesm i budu" (I Was, Am, and Will Remain a Rusyn). The entire congress was covered widely on Czechoslovak and Yugoslav television, radio, and the press.

At its closing session, the congress approved a declaration prepared by the presidium which stated that "Rusyns are not

a part of the Ukrainian people, but a distinct people that in the future wishes to decide for itself what it needs." Future congresses will be held every two years; the magazine, *Rusyn*, with an interregional editorial board will serve as the congress organ; and a Rusyn delegation will be sent to join the Federal Union of European Nationalities based in Denmark.

The First World Congress of Rusyns made it clear that the revival among Rusyns in the homeland is not the concern of a few individuals, but rather of an ever-increasing number of people organized together in five new Rusyn associations and represented by new Rusyn-language newspapers and magazines. As Oleksander Zozuljak, the editor of *Nove žyttja* (April 2, 1991, p. 1) observed: "The congress has made the world know that Rusyns exist and will continue to exist whether one likes it or not. Spring is that time of the year when everything comes alive. There is a certain symbolism in the fact that in these first days of spring the First World Congress of Rusyns took place and that Rusyns have come alive. But whether there will be a productive harvest depends on them alone and on their everyday detailed work of which there is much that awaits them."

Philip Michaels

A UNIQUE DOCUMENT

The recent political changes in the Soviet Union have made possible the re-legalization of the Greek Catholic Church that had been banned by Soviet authorities between 1946 and 1949. The former "underground" Greek Catholic bishops from the Soviet Ukraine were received for the first time at the Vatican by the Pope in July 1990, and they were officially installed in their eparchies by a papal decree in January 1991. Finally, in March 1991, the seat of the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Archdiocese of L'viv, headed by Myroslav Cardinal Lubachivsky, which had been in exile in Rome, was established in L'viv.

The reestablishment of the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church in the Soviet Ukraine raises the question of eparchial jurisdiction. The Eparchy of Mukačevo in the province (oblast) of Transcarpathia with its seat in Užhorod was never under the jurisdiction of the Archeparchy of L'viv. Since 1945, however, the Mukačevo Eparchy finds itself for the first time within the borders of the same state as that of the Archeparchy of L'viv, the Ukrainian SSR. The hierarchy of the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church headed by Cardinal Lubachivsky claims that on religious and national grounds the Eparchy of Mukačevo should be subordinate to the L'viv Archeparchy. However, two of the three bishops as well as the vast majority of the priests in the Eparchy of Mukačevo, who adamantly refer to their church by its historic name Greek Catholic, not Ukrainian Catholic, do not want a change in the jurisdictional status of their eparchy. In that regard, they argue that the Eparchy of Mukačevo should remain directly under the Vatican, like the neighboring Greek Catholic eparchies of Prešov (in Czechoslovakia) and Hajdúdorog (in Hungary) which had once been part of the Mukačevo Eparchy.

The ordinary of the Mukačevo Eparchy, Bishop Ivan Semedij, and his auxiliary, Bishop Josyf Holovač, have been pressured by other hierarchs in the Soviet Ukraine and in the West to become part of the L'viv Archeparchy. The Ukrainian press in the West has criticized the "separatist actions" of Bishop Semedij and Holovač, who, in the words of the Ukrainian Catholic synod, are attempting "to tear away the Mukačevo Eparchy from the mother Greek Catholic Church." The Mukačevo Eparchy's second auxiliary, Bishop Ivan Margityč, resident in Chust, favors joining with the L'viv Archeparchy and often acts toward that end without the approval of the eparchy's ordinary, Bishop Semedij.

Here, in the form of an open letter to Pope John Paul II, follows the official position of the Eparchy of Mukačevo on this matter. Bishop Semedij has requested that it be brought to the attention of the faithful abroad.

Užhorod
January 15, 1991

Holy Father!

In July 1990, on the eve of our return from Rome to Užhorod, I and my auxiliary bishop, Josef Holovač, prepared a letter for Your Holiness. In that letter we described the situation in which the bishops of the L'viv Metropolia headed by his Beatitude Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky tried to pressure us to agree to unite the Eparchy of Mukačevo with the L'viv Metropolia. We could not accept this, because such an agreement might become the cause of unforeseen results which would have negatively influenced the saving of human souls.

According to official statistical sources, as of January 12, 1990, there are 1,252,300 inhabitants in Transcarpathia. Of these, there are 976,749 Rusyns and Ukrainians; 155,711 Magyars; 49,458 Russians; 29,485 Romanians; 12,131 Gypsies; 7,329 Slovaks; and 21,437 Germans, Jews, Belorussians and others.

For centuries our Mukačevo Eparchy was an "ecclesia sui juris" [jursidictionally distinct church community]. Therefore, we request in the name of the majority of our faithful and clergy that in the future Your Holiness preserve for our Mukačevo Eparchy its status of "ecclesia sui juris," which places us directly under the Apostolic See.

We are ready to meet and to cooperate with the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but we want to preserve our own national and religious freedom and independence.

Presenting before Your Holiness the filial devotion of our faithful monks, sisters, and priests, and in the hope that our requests will be addressed, I close by expressing respect and love toward you, Holy Father, and toward the Holy Roman Apostolic Throne of Peter.

Your and the Holy Throne of Peter's faithful sons,

Josyf Holovač	Ivan Semedij
Auxiliary Bishop	Bishop of Mukačevo

[Then follow the names and signatures with the final statement: "Of the 95 priests of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukačevo, 73 priests signed this statement."]

Minneapolis, Minnesota. On February 2, 1991, the Rusin Association of Minnesota held its Sixth Annual Duchnovyč Dinner in Minneapolis. The event was attended by almost 100 people, some wearing traditional Carpatho-Rusyn folk clothing. President of the association, Lawrence Goga, spoke on the Rusyn revival in the homeland. In addition, the association's oldest member, ninety-year-old Michael Gladis, whose parents were part of the earliest Carpatho-Rusyn immigration from the European homeland, was honored at the dinner. The meal included traditional Rusyn foods, among them *mačanka* (mushroom soup), *pyrohȳ*, and *holubky*. Carpatho-Rusyn music was provided by the Rusin Players under the direction of the Reverend Vladimir Lecko of St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral of Minneapolis.

The Rusin Players performing at the Sixth Annual Duchnovyč Dinner. From the left: David Lucs, Peter Langlais, Tom Korba, and Anne Voytovich.

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. On March 15, 1991, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi delivered a lecture, "The Revolution of 1989 and National Minorities in East Central Europe," at the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The basic theme of the lecture was that the future well-being of minorities will be possible only when the countries in East Central Europe join the rest of the European Community in which international boundaries will lose their significance after 1992. Slovak historians welcomed what they called Magocsi's vision of Europe, but they are fearful of what will occur between now and the several decades before the new Europe is formed.

Užhorod, Soviet Union. On March 17, 1991, over 250 people attended a lecture by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi entitled "Carpatho-Rusyns: A New or Revived People," which addressed the theoretical and practical issues facing the present Rusyn revival in Europe. The event was sponsored by the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, and following the lecture a cultural program of Rusyn songs and dances was performed in honor of the guest from North America.

Užhorod, Soviet Union. On March 18, 1991, a seminar entitled, "The Persistence of Regional Cultures: Rusyn-Ukrainians in the Carpathians and Abroad," took place in the chambers of the Transcarpathian National Council (parliament) in Užhorod. This was the first time the Rusyn question was discussed in public by a group of scholars from several countries and of differing intellectual convictions. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Ukrainian National Committee of the International Association of Ukrainianists (MAU), the Ukraina Society, and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Six speakers discussed the status of Rusyns (only two of whom described them as Ukrainians) in the six countries where they live: Dr. Oleksa Myšanyč (Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, Kiev) on Soviet Transcarpathia; Dr. Mykola Mušynka (Šafárik University, Prešov) on the Prešov Region in Czechoslovakia; Olena Duc-Fajfer (Jagiellonian University, Cracow), on the Lemko Region in Poland; Dr. István Udvari (Bessenyei Pedagogical Institute, Nyíregyháza) on Rusyns in present-day Hungary; Ljubomir Medješi (Ruske Slovo, Novi Sad) on Rusyns in the Vojvodina in Yugoslavia; and Dr. Paul R. Magocsi (University of Toronto) on Rusyns in the United States. Nearly 200 people attended the public seminar, and the questions and sometimes passionate discussion reflected a split between those in the audience of a pro-Rusyn and those of a pro-Ukrainian national orientation. Among the formal discussants were several professors from the University of Užhorod, including Dr. Pavlo Čučka and Dr. Jurij Balega, as well as the Lemko specialist Ivan Krasovs'kyj from L'viv and Professor Julijan Tamaš from the University of Novi Sad in Yugoslavia.

The following day the members of the seminar were guests of the University of Užhorod where they met and engaged in an often lively public discussion with the over 300 students, faculty, and guests, including members of the executive committee of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Užhorod.

Cracow, Poland. On March 19, 1991, in the impressive auditorium of the Polish Academy of Sciences of Jagiellonian University, nearly 100 faculty, students, and interested public came to the seminar on Rusyns (speakers and topics the same as described above under **Užhorod, Soviet Union**). The seminar, under the chairmanship of the distinguished Slavist Dr. Wiesław Witkowski and conducted by Dr. Andrzej Zięba, was co-sponsored by the Institute of East Slavic Philology and the Chair of Ukrainian Literature at Jagiellonian University, the Institute for Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Among the formal discussants was the Lemko-language poet and cultural leader, Petro Trochanovskij. The audience included the leading Polish specialist on Lemkos, Dr. Roman Reinfuss, observers from the Polish government, and leading activists from the two Lemko organizations: the pro-Lemko Association of Lemkos and the pro-Ukrainian Union of Lemkos. The following day, the seminar participants met at Jagiellonian University's Institute of East Slavic Philology to observe the progress being made by that institution on its Lemko dictionary project.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On March 21, 1991, the international seminar on Rusyns (speakers and topics the same as described above under **Užhorod, Soviet Union**) was held in

the Rusyn center (Rus'kij Dom) in Prešov. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Philosophical Faculty and Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature of Šafárik University; the Association of Ukrainianists in Slovakia—a national branch of the International Association of Ukrainianists (MAU); and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. Over 160 persons attended the day-long seminar.

The discussants, including Dr. Jurij Bača and Dr. Mykola Štec of Šafárik University, as well as the vast majority of the audience, consisted of the pro-Ukrainian intelligentsia in Prešov. Many of the comments by scholars like Dr. Fedir Kovač and Dr. Mychajlo Roman or by writers like Mychajlo Šmajda and Stepan Hostynjak were critical of what they called the "politicized" pro-Rusyn views of four of the six seminar speakers. Other scholars, like Dr. Vasyl Choma and Dr. Mychajlo Molnar from Bratislava and Dr. Zdeněk Nejedlý from Prague commented positively on the scholarly approach of the seminar.

Johnstown, Pennsylvania. On March 23, 1991, the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown (UPJ) held it sixth annual Ethnic Festival. For the fourth consecutive year, the event included a Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and informational exhibit organized by Keith Koshute of Windber, Pennsylvania. He was assisted by Dave Felix of Johnstown and Richard Custer of Palmyra, Pennsylvania. This year's display was the largest to date at the festival and featured items from the collections of Jerry Jumba of Herminie, Pennsylvania; Pauline Florina of Bensenville, Illinois; and Keith Koshute. The exhibit included books distributed by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, two maps of the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, icons, Rusyn cultural items, books borrowed from the Penn State Library, Rusyn costumes, videos relating to Carpatho-Rusyns, handouts about Rusyns, and Richard Custer's photographs of Pennsylvania churches founded by Galician and Subcarpathian Rusyns.

Also participating in the festival was Christ the Saviour American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Cathedral. The Cathedral sold food items, as well as articles from Christ the Saviour Seminary Bookstore. In addition, the Cathedral's folk dancers performed.

Richard Custer, Keith Koshute, and Dave Felix at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown Ethnic Festival.

Kucura, Yugoslavia. On March 24, 1991, at the cultural center in Kucura, the second largest Rusyn-inhabited town in the Vojvodina, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and Dr. Mykola Mušynka of Šafárik University in Prešov lectured to a gathering of local Rusyn cultural activists and local inhabitants. Magocsi spoke about the current status of Yugoslavia's Rusyns in the context of the 1989 revolutions in East Central Europe; Mušynka reported on the earliest description of Yugoslavia's Rusyns from the 1890s that was authored by a native of Kucura and recently found in Kiev.

Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. On March 25, 1991, the international seminar of Rusyns (speakers and topics the same as described above under **Užhorod, Soviet Union)** took place in Novi Sad, the cultural center of Rusyns in Yugoslavia. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Rusyn Society (Ruska Matka) and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. About 75 teachers, professors, writers, and cultural activists attended the seminar, which was given wide coverage on Yugoslav television, radio, and in the media.

The following day the seminar participants went to Ruski Kerestur, the largest Rusyn-inhabited town in the Vojvodina, where they particpated in a meeting with teachers and upper level students at the Petro Kuzmjak Elementary and Secondary School. This institution, with over 700 students, is the only school in the world in which all subjects, from literature and history to physics and computer sciences, are taught in Rusyn. The students and local cultural leaders, like the school's prinicipal Mychal Varga and editor Djura Papharhaj, were particularly pleased with how the seminar placed the Rusyns in an international scholarly context.

New York, New York. On Tuesday, March 26, 1991, Professor Janusz Rieger, President of the Research Council of the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences since 1990 and Head of its Ukrainian Language Section since 1972, lectured at the Linguistics Department of New York University on the subject of language in the Carpathian Mountain region. The lecture was sponsored by New York University's Slavic Department and the Russian/American Interest Society at New York University.

Professor Rieger discussed the development of the Rusyn language, concentrating on the three dialects, Hucul, Bojko, and Lemko, and examining the ethnic and geographical influences exerted on each of them. He drew an analogy between the development of the Rusyn and Macedonian languages, both of which have long struggled to establish their languages internationally as valid literary languages. Macedonian achieved this status soon after the end of World War I. Rieger does not, however, share the optimism of many Rusyns regarding the future of Rusyn language and culture.

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A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage

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FROM THE EDITOR

Revolutionary changes since 1989 have opened new relationships with the east European homeland. These relationships have taken several forms. Rusyn Americans continue to visit relatives in the homeland, but in the past two years visits of relatives to the United States and Canada have become easier to arrange and have increased in number. Economic assistance is now being offered to the fledgling market economies of East Central Europe, and eastern European economists are receiving instruction in the workings of the market economy at educational institutions in the west.

Rusyns in the homeland are studying English in increasing numbers, and most importantly, they are now freer than anytime in recent years to learn about their own culture. Political and ideological constraints had made this difficult and even impossible at times in the past. Without these constraints, Rusyns have the opportunity to accomplish a great deal in terms of piecing together their history and revitalizing their language and literature. The new atmosphere of peace, however, does not mean that all is quiet on the Rusyn front. In fact, excitement continues to build as Rusyns and others gather together and speak out on issues of identity, culture, language, relationships with close neighbors, and the future (see *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1991, p. 4, as well as the article by L. Haraksim in this issue).

In an attempt to study their history, Rusyns in the homeland have found themselves confronted with a challenging situation: very few existing historical and cultural materials are untainted by past ideologies. In this regard, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center is providing an important service. Rusyns in the homeland have turned to the C-RRC for books and materials which are historically sound and cover past history and events in an open, scholarly, and accurate fashion. We have gotten requests from libraries and newly-formed cultural centers, as well as from individuals.

One example of such a request for materials came from Aleksander Franko in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. Franko is a Rusyn who worked in the Czechoslovak diplomatic service in Indonesia for several years where he learned English. Upon his return to Czechoslovakia, he settled again in Medzilaborce and is presently teaching English. He is active in the Andy Warhol Society and served as the chairman of the First World Congress of Rusyns this year (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1991, p. 7). This spring Franko received several issues of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* from the C-RRC, and responded with the following letter:

> Thank you very much for the packet full of *Carpatho-Rusyn American* newsletters! I was delighted to see all the issues. It was just at the beginning of a weekend and I spent two whole days reading them. I found many names in the articles which were familiar to me. What I especially appreciate is that all the texts are in English. The newsletters help me in two ways. My students can be introduced to the most important Rusyns of the past (in some cases, not such a distant past)—and will have an opportunity for the first time in their lives to see important persons in Rusyn history all together. And at the same time, my students can read all of this in English!
>
> I am presently thinking about organizing a small exhibit of the materials you sent to me, but this will require some preparation. It would be geared for our students. This is the first year that English is being taught at my school, and our children between the ages of 10 and 14 are not yet able to comprehend very much in the language. I'm certain that the value of the exhibit will depend partly on my preparation of the display. Other schools in Medzilaborce will no doubt be interested in such a display as well. I shall inform you of our progress.
>
> We now have a Dramatic Arts Festival in Medzilaborce. It will include about ten performances of our Rusyn theater groups, and I shall write about it more next time. Meanwhile, I wish you all the best.

For the C-RRC, such a response is gratifying. We have provided materials to Rusyns in the homeland on a limited basis even in the past, but now more channels are open and more requests continue to be received. Unfortunately, the C-RRC with its limited resources cannot satisfy all the requests. We call on Americans of Rusyn background to aid in this endeavor. The best way to help is to send contributions to the C-RRC specifically designated for books to be sent to Rusyns in the homeland. The time has come to demonstrate to our brothers and sisters who are rising up to renew and preserve their Rusyn identity that we care about them.

OUR FRONT COVER

The Cultural Center (Kultúrny Dom), in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia, completed in 1991—site of the First World Congress of Rusyns in March and since June the home of the Museum of Modern Art and Andy Warhol Society. Photo: Antonín Žižka.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

The *Carpatho-Rusyn American* (ISSN 0749-9213) is a quarterly publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc., a non-profit cultural organization whose purpose is to promote knowledge about all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture through the publication and distribution of scholarly and educational material about the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage in Europe and America.

General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

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IVAN RAKOVS'KYJ (1815-1885)

The nineteenth century was known as the era of nationalism when many peoples in Europe gradually became aware of their national identities. Among those who entered the path of self-discovery were the Carpatho-Rusyns. Under the leadership of the writer Aleksander Duchnovyč and the politician Adol'f Dobrjans'kyj, the Rusyns experienced a national revival during the second half of the nineteenth century. Among the activists who followed the lead of Duchnovyč and Dobrjans'kyj was Ivan Rakovs'kyj.

Rakovs'kyj was born in 1815 in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Stavne (Už county), in what was then the Hungarian Kingdom and today the Transcarpathian oblast (Subcarpathian Rus') of the Ukraine. His father was a village notary who provided the young Ivan with an elementary education at home before sending the nine-year-old off to *gymnasium* (high school) in Užhorod and later Košice. Ivan continued his studies at the Užhorod Theological Seminary where he studied under the "national awakener of the Carpatho-Rusyn people," Aleksander Duchnovyč. Among the most important influences Duchnovyč passed on was a belief in the strength of tsarist Russia and Russian culture, which seemed so promising to representatives of a people like the Carpatho-Rusyns, who at the time were a small and weak Slavic minority living in the increasingly Magyarized environment of the Hungarian Kingdom.

After ordination in 1839 as a Greek Catholic clergyman, Rakovs'kyj served for a short while as a parish priest, but then in 1844 he was transferred to Užhorod where he became a professor and vice-rector of the theological seminary. His career as a teacher was to end in 1850, when he moved to the imperial capital of Vienna, having accepted the post of official translator for laws and other codes that needed to be rendered into the languages of all the peoples of Austria-Hungary. Rakovs'kyj was responsible for the Carpatho-Rusyns, but first a concrete question had to be answered: what was the most appropriate literary language that should be used in publications intended for Rusyns? While in Vienna, Rakovs'kyj befriended Vasilij Vojtkovskij, a Russian church historian living in the Austrian capital, who helped convince the Carpatho-Rusyn priest that literary Russian would be the best language to choose.

Thus, Rakovs'kyj scorned his native Rusyn speech and issued the goverment's bulletin of laws for the Hungarian Kingdom, *Zemskij pravitel'stvennyj vjestnik dlja korolevstva Ouhorščiny* (Buda, 1850-58), in Russian. After the Austrian Imperial government decided to suspend publication of its law bulletin for Rusyns, Rakovs'kij returned to his native Subcarpathian Rus', where he became a priest in the village of Iza near Chust.

It was at this stage of his career that Rakovs'kyj became directly involved in Subcarpathian cultural life. In 1866, he served as acting chairman of the newly-founded Rusyn cultural organization in Užhorod, the Society of St. Basil the Great. That society published several textbooks for schools, including three by Rakovs'kyj himself. The two on arithmetic (1869) and geography (1870) were written in Russian, the third was a grammar of Russian written in Hungarian (1867). Rakovs'kyj had become fully enamored with Russia and even wanted to move there. Although such a move never took place, he did attend the Russian Ethnographic Congress held in Moscow in 1867.

For Rakovs'kyj as for many of his contemporaries, tsarist Russia seemed to be the only hope for a downtrodden Slavic nationality like the Rusyns. Of course, these Russophile Rusyns identified with a Russia they had never seen and with a Russian language they knew poorly or hardly at all. Nearly another century was to pass before Carpatho-Rusyns finally came to know Russians first hand. This happened only after their Subcarpathian homeland was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1945. Today we know the fruits of that experience. After four decades, there are few, if any, young people who look to Russia or anywhere else in the East for salvation. Instead, the inhabitants of Subcarpathian Rus' are more and more dependent on the uniqueness of their own Rusyn culture with its deep roots in the heart of East Central Europe to sustain their spiritual and national needs.

Philip Michaels

THE RUSYNS OF SLOVAKIA

Dr. L'udovít Haraksim is a member of the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. A specialist in nationality problems, he was an advisor to the reformist government of Alexander Dubček during the Prague Spring of 1968. After the Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, he was fired from the academy. For nearly two decades he worked in politically "less sensitive" jobs, for many years in the Slovak Museum and then as vice-chairman of the Matica Slovenska. After Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Revolution" of November 1989 deposed the Communist regime, Haraksim was reinstated in the Academy. During the past two years, he has again become a respected commentator on the nationality problem in Czechoslovakia and has served as a government advisor on Slovakia's national minorities. The following is the text of a report he was asked to prepare in early 1991 for the Slovak government.—Editor

At the outset of my presentation, I should state that once again in Eastern Slovakia one hears talk of Rusyns but not of Ukrainians, even though in our country a Rusyn nationality was liquidated and in its stead a Ukrainian nationality was decreed to exist. A constitutional law of 1968 concerning nationalities introduced the term "Ukrainians (Rusyns)" to designate this ethnic group or nationality. The law put the term Rusyns in parentheses, thereby indicating that anyone who called himself Rusyn was registered as a Ukrainian, whether he wanted this or not. This was fully supported in practice. Neither the term Rusyn nor the hybrid "Ukrainian-Rusyn" were recorded in passports, only the term Ukrainian.

From the beginning of the 1950s, when the decision was made to liquidate the Rusyn nationality, any and all measures were undertaken to inculcate the Rusyns in Czechoslovakia with Ukrainian consciousness so that they should become nationally-conscious Ukrainians. The process of transforming Rusyns into Ukrainians became known as Ukrainianization. Political and state organs fully supported the process, as did cultural institutions and the Orthodox Church which took the place of the suppressed Greek Catholic Church in 1950. Despite Ukrainianization, a significant segment of the Rusyn population preserved its original Rusyn consciousness and remained Rusyn. It is true, however, that Ukrainianization was not completely unsuccessful. A smaller segment of Rusyns, largely from the ranks of the intelligentsia which had been educated in Ukrainian schools both in Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet Ukraine, adopted a Ukrainian consciousness and consciously sought to become members of the Ukrainian nationality.

The fact that the years of Ukrainianization neither suppressed Rusyn consciousness nor changed Rusyns into Ukrainians became evident for the first time during the memorable year 1968. At that time, the segment of Rusyns who had preserved their Rusyn consciousness publicly rejected Ukrainianization and demanded recognition of their authentic Rusyn nationality. The influence of the Rusyn movement was reflected also in the constitutional law of 1968 on nationalities which resolved—if this can be called a resolution at all—the dilemma of the national identity, that is, whether Rusyns are Ukrainians or Rusyns. The law designated them as "Ukrainians (Rusyns)." During the years of [Communist President Gustav] Husák's consolidation of power, the Rusyn movement was considered heresy, but nothing changed in the text of the law. In practice, Rusyns were registered as Ukrainians even when they personally disagreed with this. The revival or the recognition once again of a Rusyn nationality was not desirable, especially with respect to our neighbor to the east, the Soviet Union. The existence of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia, after all, might provoke an unwanted reaction on the part of the indigenous inhabitants of the former Subcarpathian Rus', and this had to be avoided at all costs.

With the demise of totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia, the question of who are our Rusyns—Ukrainians or Rusyns—has again been raised. Rusyns of the Rusyn orientation are once more demanding recognition of a specifically Rusyn nationality and restitution of their status in eastern Slovakia as it was before Ukrainianization. Against them stands that segment of Rusyns who consider themselves Ukrainians. In the confrontation between these two groups of Rusyns, the problem lies specifically in the determination of a definition once again of the national identity of Rusyns, that is, in a resolution of the question whether Rusyns are Ukrainians or Rusyns.

In the present phase of the argument, this dilemma has been resolved by the use of the hyphenated term "Rusyn-Ukrainian" to designate the national identity of the Rusyn population. In contrast to the law of 1968 which called the Rusyns "Ukrainians (Rusyns)," the term Rusyn now occupies the first position and is connected by a hyphen to the term Ukrainian, thus once again producing a hybrid nationality. This type of designation was demanded by the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia (SRUČ). It is clear that such a designation is not a resolution and that the argument about the national identity of Rusyns will continue. For us the result of this confrontation is important, that is, whether the Rusyns in Czechoslovakia will be designated as Rusyns and will consider themselves a distinct Rusyn ethnic or national group which is solidly grounded on the soil of the Slovak Republic, or whether they will consider themselves a Ukrainian national minority. It is also interesting to note that in the former Subcarpathian Rus' [Soviet Transcarpathia] a similar argument is going on at the present time, and among the indigenous Rusyn population of that area a strong Rusyn current has emerged that calls for separation from Ukrainians and the Ukraine.

The origins and nature of Ukrainianization among Rusyns in Czechoslovakia

It is clear that the basic problem of Rusyn national life at present is the question of national identity about which arguments continue. Thus, it is essential to explore the question why the obviously larger segment of Rusyns is demanding recognition of a Rusyn nationality and the elimination of Ukrainianization, as well as the institutions which depended on it, after almost forty years of resolute Ukrainianization. In order for this question to be understood, several points should be examined: what really was Ukrainianization; on what basis did it emerge; and so on. All of this must be explored because without an understanding of these elements, it is impossible to grasp the Rusyn revival and today's form of the Rusyn question.

The beginnings of the Ukrainianization of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia is customarily connected with the decision of the presidium of the UV KSS [Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia] concerning the establishment

of Ukrainian schools and the introduction of Ukrainian as the standard language in schools from June 1952. This approach, however, is not accurate. Ukrainian institutions and establishments, that is, those which in their name would suggest that they were Ukrainian, in fact arose in eastern Slovakia just after World War II, several years before the Ukrainianization decrees.

Among these institutions were the Ukrainian National Council of the Prešov Region (March 1, 1945); the Ukrainian National Theater (March 2, 1946); and Ukrainian-language radio station (November 3, 1945). These institutions were supposed to serve the needs of the Rusyn community in eastern Slovakia. I deliberately emphasize the term Rusyn, because shortly after the war and in the years after it, only a negligible number of Rusyns identified with the Ukrainian nationality. An absolute majority of Rusyns declared themselves of Rusyn or Russian nationality, and they did not differentiate between the terms "Rusyn" (*rusĭnska*) and "Russian" (*ruská*). This is because the adjectival form for both the words, Rusyn and Rus' in the Rusyn language is "*rus'kyj*" (not *rusyns'kyj*) which led to the merging and identification of the concepts of Rusyn and Rus'. Under these circumstances, it would have been logical if the above-mentioned institutions and establishments for Rusyns—the national council, national theater, and radio station—were called Russian [*ruský*] or Rusyn [*rusĭnsky*], especially since a Rusynized version of Russian, and not Ukrainian, was the dominant language used by them. Nonetheless, the institutions were called Ukrainian. This shows that Ukrainianizing tendencies appeared already immediately after the end of World War II, even though at the time there did not exist appropriate conditions to implement Ukrainianization.

The situation was even more paradoxical because the institutions which indicated in their titles that they were Ukrainian neither presented themselves outwardly as Ukrainian nor did they exhibit in practice any Ukrainian character. It is well known, for example, that the Ukrainian National Council of the Prešov Region functioned using a Rusynized Russian and that its publications intended for Rusyns were produced in the same language. It should be mentioned that not every local Rusyn institution passed itself off as Ukrainian. Elementary and intermediate schools—high schools, teachers' colleges, and junior high schools—called themselves Russian and instruction took place in the elementary schools in Rusyn and in the intermediate schools in literary Russian. This network of Rusyn schools (and here is a further paradox) was run until 1949 by the Department for Ukrainian Schools in the then Commissariat of Schools and Culture, in which, despite its title, a Rusynized Russian rather than Ukrainian predominated.

To put the finishing touches on these schizophrenic conditions, it must be remembered that the periodicals intended for our Rusyns in Czechoslovakia after 1945 were published in a linguistic combination of Rusynized Russian—which completely dominated in them—and in Rusyn vernacular. Not a single magazine for Rusyns was produced in Ukrainian. From all of this it can be seen that Rusyns in Czechoslovakia after the war did not accept Ukrainian as their written language nor did they orient themselves toward the Ukraine in terms of nationality, that is, as Ukrainians, although institutions which were called Ukrainian were organized for them. This situation was in agreement with their traditions.

It must also be noted that among our Rusyn populace in the Prešov Region—in contrast to Subcarpathian Rus'—Ukrainian traditions did not put down roots even in the interwar republic. As an illustration of this fact it is sufficient to mention that among more than ten periodicals which were published for Rusyns in eastern Slovakia, not one appeared in literary Ukrainian (in dialect, yes!) and that the Prosvita Society, a Ukrainian-oriented cultural-educational establishment, operated in eastern Slovakia only in one place, Prešov, a town which was not Rusyn even though a number of Rusyns resided there.

The war years did not change this situation, and the position of Rusyns in the Prešov Region toward Ukrainian and the Ukrainian orientation remained the same as before. This position can explain why post-war attempts at Ukrainianization failed in eastern Slovakia, although immediately after the war Ukrainian institutions and establishments were set up for them. The answer can be formulated in this way: the Ukrainian tendencies, namely the Ukrainian national orientation, could not be implemented here because it did not spring organically from any national needs of the Rusyn community in Slovakia. Such was the situation until 1952, when the above-mentioned resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Slovakia began consciously to impose from above a strictly controlled program of Ukrainianization.

From what has been said thus far, it may seem as though Ukrainianization had no realistic basis. This, however, is not true. There can be no doubt about the fact that Rusyns are an East Slavic group, more specifically part of that larger ethnic group to which the Ukrainians also belong, and that the Rusyn language is a dialect of Ukrainian. Insofar as Ukrainianization stemmed from these two attributes of the Rusyns (origin and language), it was justified. But these attributes were not sufficient for the preservation or the creation of a national unity. Even more important was another factor: common history. The Rusyns, including those in Subcarpathian Rus' or Transcarpathia, lived in connection with the Hungarian state and were separated from the rest of the Ukraine, and thus their past is different from that of the Ukrainians. In other words, Rusyns do not have a common history with Ukrainians, nor common traditions which could bind them. Without a common history and common traditions, it is impossible to develop a feeling of cohesiveness, and without this feeling it is impossible to create a common national consciousness.

Rusyns preserved a consciousness of belonging to the realm of East Slavdom, a consciousness aided to a certain extent by their Greek-Slavonic faith—Orthodox and later Greek Catholic—but historically they developed differently than their nearest East Slavic neighbors beyond the Carpathians. Their development did not take them in the direction of unity with the other Ukrainians, but rather to a distinct national individuality. This fact was undervalued or ignored by political and state organs in the rush toward Ukrainianization.

The Communist movement from 1924 considered Rusyns part and parcel of the Ukrainian people. This was decided at the fifth congress of the Communist International. Later, after 1945, Czechoslovakia's Communists had to take into account the development of conditions and Ukrainianization occurring in neighboring Subcarpathian Rus', which as a part of the Ukraine—Transcarpathian Ukraine—had been joined to the Soviet Ukraine. Inasmuch as Rusyns in Slovakia and the indigenous population of Subcarpathian

Rus' comprise one branch of the East Slavs, it was not possible for our Rusyns in Slovakia to remain as Rusyns while the larger part of the same branch was designated as Ukrainians. Therefore, it was decided, whether in Prague or in Bratislava, that Rusyns in Slovakia would also be designated as Ukrainians and that their development would follow in the same direction. This began after 1952.

The failure of Ukrainianization

Ukrainianization was a political phenomenon and did not emerge organically from the needs of the Rusyn community. Thus, it is natural that when the state's totalitarian power weakened in 1968 and then fell in 1989, among the Rusyn community voices were raised demanding recognition of a Rusyn nationality and its official acceptance. What is particularly surprising is that such voices should also be raised in Subcarpathian Rus' after forty years of Ukrainianization and Sovietization calling for separation from the Ukrainians and the Ukraine. In connection with this strong separatist tendency in the Soviet Ukraine and in Czechoslovakia, it would appear that the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus', that is Transcarpathia, to the Soviet Ukraine, actually interrupted the natural process of the formation of a fourth distinct East Slavic nationality—the Rusyn nationality. If it had not been for that union and the subsequent Ukrainianization of Rusyns, this process of nationality formation would in all probability be completed today. At present this process has started up again, and how it will be completed remains to be seen.

In connection with Ukrainianization, even Slovaks have been reproached, especially with regard to one aspect which appeared to favor them. It is certainly true that those Rusyns who did not want to identify themselves as Ukrainians, chose instead Slovak nationality and sent their children to Slovak schools—which led to their denationalization as Rusyns. One must bear in mind, however, that the notion of the Ukrainianization of Rusyns did not spring from Slovak heads and was not dictated by Slovaks, nor by Czechoslovak interests and needs.

It is worth mentioning another similar action, that is, the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church in eastern Slovakia which went on along with Ukrainianization from 1950. This action affected not only Rusyns but also Slovak Greek Catholics who locally are conventionally referred to as "Rusnaks." The Greek Catholic denomination in eastern Slovakia was traditionally considered to be the "Rusyn faith," and for that reason all Greek Catholics, including Slovaks, were by virtue of their faith "Rusnaks."

The reestablishment of the Orthodox Church unarguably helped some "Rusnaks" become aware of their own national allegiance and separate themselves from other members of the "Rusyn faith" who were in fact Rusyns, but it is not accurate to portray this act as a Rusyn loss for the benefit of Slovaks. Neither is it possible to deny that Ukrainianization and the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church contributed to the fact that more than one Rusyn, who did not want to be Ukrainian, accepted Slovak nationality; and if he were a believer but did not want to be Orthodox he became *de facto* Roman Catholic. This also helped to deplete the Rusyn community. But Rusyns did not flock in this direction in great masses, nor from any Slovak initiative. And what is especially important is that this was not part of any concept of national politics on the part of the state. On the contrary, Ukrainianization was supposed to make of Rusyns conscious Ukrainians—and the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church was to bind them with Ukrainians and to the Ukraine also on a spiritual plane. Both of these actions were carried out under the supervision and guidance of Vasyl Bil'ak, the first secretary of the Slovak Communist Party for the Prešov district.

The most zealous activists of Bil'ak's plans were people from his own circle who were close to him and, as it is well known, who were of Rusyn origin. This is important because the systematic decrease in the number of Rusyns or Ukrainians is attributed by Rusyns to the Slovaks, although the Slovaks were precisely the people most uninterested in it. Now and then these complaints were formulated in such a way that they justifiably caused offense among Slovaks. Indeed, a statement that Slovaks were committing genocide against Rusyns, made in a television broadcast on the nationality question (January 3, 1990) could not help but offend.

The decline in the number of Rusyns in eastern Slovakia is, along with the question of Rusyn national identity, another problem. What has caused and is causing this decline? A sociological research project was undertaken in May 1990 in order to determine the reasons for the decline in the national consciousness of the "Rusyn-Ukrainians" (this is the term the researchers used for Rusyns) in Czechoslovakia during the past forty years. The researchers found that the major reason was the movement of the Rusyn rural population to cities (urbanization), the administrative transition to a Ukrainian orientation (Ukrainianization), the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church, and the destruction of a number of Ukrainian schools.

It is unclear why a departure to cities should manifest itself in a decline of national consciousness and why the decline in the number of Ukrainian schools should be presented as a result of the decline of "Rusyn-Ukrainian" national consciousness. After all, an interest in instruction given in Ukrainian fell from the moment that Ukrainian began being used as the language of instruction in Rusyn schools. Otherwise, it is true that the number of schools offering instruction in Ukrainian decreased not only because of lack of interest in Ukrainian instruction, but also because in Rusyn villages, as well as throughout Slovakia, primary schools were liquidated. Besides these reasons for the decline in "Rusyn-Ukrainian" national consciousness, the researchers added the annexation of Transcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Ukraine and prejudices with regard to "Rusyn-Ukrainians" who lived in Slovakia. It was largely the Rusyn respondents in this research project who harbored this feeling.

It appears that the reasons which according to sociologists contributed to the decline in Rusyn national consciousness are actually reasons for the decrease in the number of Rusyns. Yet one additional reason should be added: fear on the part of Rusyns that because they were considered Ukrainians they would perhaps be sent off to the Ukraine. After the war, some Rusyns did go to the Ukraine voluntarily, but it must be said that this development did not turn out successfully. In the 1960s, the majority of these settlers made their way back to Slovakia and told about what they had experienced in their new chosen land. This could not help but have an effect on the people's consciousness and, in the end, on the number of persons calling themselves Rusyn.

It is noteworthy that the respondents in this research project did not cite as a decisive reason for the decline in Rusyn

national consciousness any national oppression, even though opinions about it were found. This means that the decline in the total number of Rusyns cannot be connected with their national oppression. And neither is any kind of discrimination toward Rusyns in social life cited as a reason for the decline. It is known that Rusyns occupied significant posts in the Communist Party and state apparatus, in the army, security, diplomatic service, in higher education as instructors and professors, and finally as researchers in scholarly institutions. The number of these Rusyns is extraordinarily high, several times the percentage of the Rusyn population in Czechoslovakia. In spite of these obvious realities, some people still speak and even write about discrimination and oppression of Rusyns in Czechoslovakia.

Conclusion

From the several aspects of the Rusyn problem after the fall of the totalitarian system in Czechoslovakia outlined here, it is clear that the major problem for Rusyns at the present time is the resolution of their national identity. Ukrainianization did not resolve this problem and played only a negative role in the life of Rusyns—something, in fact, admitted even by those Rusyns who identify as Ukrainians. The majority of Rusyns have rejected Ukrainianization and are working diligently to reverse this process which had been so actively encouraged by the official policies of the totalitarian regime. One expression of de-Ukrainianization has been the change of the name of the Ukrainian National Theater to the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater, after the famous Rusyn national awakener who rejected Ukrainian tendencies and assimilation on the level of a written form of Rusyn dialect. Clearly this de-Ukrainianization will continue in other spheres of Rusyn national life. Opinions have already been expressed that Ukrainian schools should be changed to Rusyn schools with instruction in Rusyn—not in the Rusynized Russian from before 1952, but in Rusyn. Rusyns see in the introduction of Rusyn into national life and in the revival of the Rusyn nationality the only possibility of halting assimilation, and their own chance to maintain themselves as a nationality.

Many believe that the revival of a Rusyn nationality can return to the Rusyns those who have become Slovak because they did not want to be Ukrainians. In any case, Rusyns must solve the problem of self-identification themselves without intervention from the outside and without manipulation of their nationality in the manner carried out by the former totalitarian regime. The renewed democratic conditions should help Rusyns in their endeavors.

Ties between Slovaks and Rusyns in the years of the totalitarian regime were not without tensions. These tensions, however, did not have any definite antagonistic character, although there were complaints on the part of Slovaks against Rusyns—largely concerning Rusyn functionaries—that they outvoted and thus supressed Slovaks. Such examples occurred, even if they were not always nationally motivated. People, however, are inclined to see some nationalistic motivation in every conflict that occurs between a functionary and a person from a national minority. It seems that this area of friction will vanish with the removal of representatives of the old structures, who clearly tended to give preference to their "own kind." There are no language barriers between Slovaks and Rusyns which could be an obstacle to mutual relations, and a common historical past also binds them together. In this sense, the conditions for the normal coexistence of Slovaks and Rusyns are in reality rather good.

L'udovít Haraksim
Bratislava, Czechoslovakia
(Translated by Patricia A. Krafcik)

REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Budapest, Hungary. On May 9-11, 1991, the Federal Union of European Nationalities, which is based in Denmark, held its 19th annual congress in Budapest. Representatives of national minorities throughout Europe with guests from the Middle East gathered to discuss the status of their peoples within the countries in which they live. Official statements from each group were given in their respective native languages with simultaneous translations into English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, and Russian.

For the first time Carpatho-Rusyns were represented at the European Nationalities Congress, and among the delegates listed on the program were: Ivan Bicko and Vasyl' Turok of the Rusyn Renaissance Society in Czechoslovakia, and Jurij Dumnyč and Aleksander Onisko of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns in Soviet Transcarpathia. Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, was present as an observer.

Dr. Bicko delivered the official statement on behalf of the Carpatho-Rusyns. Also, Petro Trochanovskij of the Society of Lemkos in Poland submitted the text of a lecture prepared specially for the congress: "The Kurds of Central Europe." This moving statement on the present status of Carpatho-Rusyns will appear in a future issue of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*.

Užhorod, Soviet Ukraine. On April 13, 1991, the Cyril and Methodius Society of the Orthodox Faithful in the Carpathian Land (Tovarystvo Pravoslavnych Karpats'koho Kraju imeni Kyryla i Mefodija) was established in Užhorod. Among its primary goals are to "revive the cultural, historical, and humanistic traditions of Rusyn-Ukrainians"; to strengthen cooperation between all nationalities and religious confessions; and to improve the social, ecological, and spiritual status of Transcarpathia's population. The new Orthodox cultural organization is headed by Archpriest Vasyl' Jarema and includes both clergy and lay people. Its national orientation is pro-Ukrainian, and among its goals is "to fulfill the age-long desire of Rusyns for spiritual renewal and national development within a united Ukraine." *Jeparchial'nyj visnyk*, no. 4 (April, 1991), p. 1.

State College, Pennsylvania. On April 5-7, 1991, Carpatho-Rusyns were well represented at the Thirteenth Annual Penn State Slavic Folk Festival. The university's Byzantine Catholic Student Ministry organized a Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic and educational display under the leadership of senior Richard Custer. The exhibit included a map of the Subcarpathian region, handouts about Rusyns, a traditional Easter basket, Carpatho-Rusyn artifacts, videos pertaining to Rusyns, and photographs of Rusyn churches in Pennsylvania. Books from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center were displayed and offered for sale. The display was staffed by Richard Custer, Nick Sowko, Dave Felix, and Keith Koshute. Display items came from the personal collections of the staffers, as well as from Jerry Jumba. The festival also featured a performance by Slavjane, the Carpatho-Rusyn folk ensemble from McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. The Fourteenth Annual Penn State Folk Festival is scheduled for March 27-29, 1992.

London, England. On May 13, 1991, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi delivered a lecture at the University of London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) entitled "The Ruthenian Question." The lecture was part of a year-long SSEES History Department Seminar on National Minorities in Eastern Europe since 1945. Dr. Magocsi discussed the theoretical question of whether or not Rusyns can and do form a distinct nationality, and then he reviewed the recent national revival in each of the countries of Europe where Rusyns live.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On May 24-26, 1991, the 35th annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival, sponsored by Robert Morris College, took place at the David Lawrence Convention Center. The Carpatho-Rusyn community from the Greater Pittsburgh area was represented by the Slavjane Folk Ensemble of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, who, under the direction of Jack Poloka, performed traditional Carpatho-Rusyn songs and dances. The ensemble also sponsored a folk art display and a food booth. This year's festival theme—"celebration"—was exemplified at the Carpatho-Rusyn exhibit with a collection of items focusing on Rusyn religious and secular events. The exhibit contained authentic embroidered ritual cloths (*ručniky*), wood carvings, and other artifacts from various regions of Carpathian Rus' on loan from the private collections of Pauline (Maksim) Florina of Bensenville, Illinois; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ozimok of Seward, Pennsylvania; and Mary (Popelich) Oldham of Windber, Pennsylvania. The display booth was coordinated by Cathy Silvestri of Monroeville, Pennsylvania, and was organized and staffed by Richard Custer (Palmyra, Pennsylvania) and Dave Felix (Johnstown, Pennsylvania). Keith Koshute (Windber, Pennsylvania) conducted *pysanky* demonstrations on the final day of the festival. Books from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, as well as religious items, were available for sale.

Carpatho-Rusyn display booth at the 1991 Pittsburgh Folk Festival.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On June 30, 1991, the Museum of Modern Art was opened in Medzilaborce. This is the first museum of contemporary art in Czechoslovakia. It is the brainchild of Dr. Michal Bycko, who for the past several years has been attempting to create a museum (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1989) based around the work of the world-famous Pop artist Andy Warhol, whose parents came from the nearby Carpatho-Rusyn village of Miková.

For the opening, the museum featured the works of Andy Warhol, his older brother Paul Warhola (who since the death of his brother has become an artist in his own right); the Italian practioner of Mail Art, Cugliehma Cavellini; and the Czech Pop artist, Michal Cihlář. Several hundred people attended the gala inauguration which coincided with the 29th annual festival of Rusyn culture and sports in Medzilaborce. The inaugural included short talks by Ladislav Snopko, Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic; Paul Warhola; and Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. On July 12-14, 1991, the Byzantine Catholic Church of Saint Mary's Holy Protection held its annual Slavic Festival. For this, the parish's centennial year, the festival featured as a special attraction a large Carpatho-Rusyn cultural display. The display was organized and constructed by Richard Custer of Palmyra, Pennsylvania. Included in the display were a showing of Carpatho-Rusyn videos (folksong and dance, Lemko wedding, Bethlehem Play); a replica of a Carpatho-Rusyn cottage dining room at Pascha; folk artifacts and costumes from Carpathian Rus', icons of the Virgin Mary considered miraculous among Carpatho-Rusyns; a photographic history of Rusyn cultural and religious life from the homeland and in immigration in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania; information on the current Rusyn revival in the homeland; and historical and liturgical items from St. Mary's parish, where the Reverend Emilij Kubek was pastor for many years. Publications of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center were available for purchase, and brochures about Carpatho-Rusyn culture and copies of the *Carpatho-Rusyn American* were distributed.

Carpatho-Rusyn historical and cultural display at Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania.

FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF RUSYNS

The First World Congress of Rusyns that took place in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia on March 23-24, 1991 (for details, see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1990, pp. 7-9) has elicited extensive attention in the press throughout East Central Europe and the Soviet Union. The wire services in the Soviet Union (TASS), Czechoslovakia (ČTK), and Poland (PAP) each carried reports on the congress. There have also been several extensive analytical articles by Julijan Kamenjicki in *Ruske slovo* (Novi Sad, Yugoslavia), March 29, 1991; Jurij Valujev in *Visti z Ukrajiny* (Kiev, Ukraine), nos. 16 and 17, April 1991; Vadym Dvynyč in *Slovo* (Kiev), May 1991; Mykola Mušynka in *Novyny Zakarpattja* (Užhorod), May 21, 1991; Volodymyr Fedynyšynec' in *Molod' Zakarpattja* (Užhorod), May 25, 1991; and Peter Juščák in *Literárny týždenník* (Bratislava, Czechoslovakia), June 21, 1991. Finally the congress has been the subject of interviews with two of its leading participants: Dr. Paul R. Magocsi in *Smena na nedel'u* (Bratislava), March 29, 1991 and Ljubomir Medješi in *Slovo* (Kiev), May 1991. Here follows the official statement issued by the congress.

Proclamation of the World Congress of Rusyns

We, the representatives of the Rusyns who live in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Polish Republic, the Carpatho-Rusyn region of the Soviet Union, and the Rusyns who reside in the United States and Canada, have met at the First World Congress of Rusyns in Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia.

Freedom and democracy have become the basis of the political and social life of Eastern Europe and have provided an opportunity for self-determination and a worthy life for our people who live in the East Carpathian region and in other countries of the world.

We Rusyns have always supported the cultural heritage of our ancestors. We admire the inspiration and enlightenment found in the works of our national poets, Aleksander Duchnovyč and Aleksander Pavlovyč, as well as other leaders who have striven to preserve our ethnic distinctiveness and identity.

The nationality policy of the totalitarian regimes in eastern Europe after World War II has caused tragic consequences for the destiny of the Rusyn people. We witnessed the forcible attempt to liquidate the Rusyn language, the cultural and religious traditions of our ancestors, and to falsify our history.

We appreciate and respect the attempts of the Ukrainian people to build democracy and to pursue a free and unfettered development. However, we declare that the Rusyns are not a part of the Ukrainian people but rather an independent and distinct people.

We are thankful to the authorities of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for their help in promoting the free development of our people. We appeal to the authorities of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to respect the national rights of Rusyns living in Subcarpathian Rus' [Soviet Transcarpathia]. The Rusyn people will stand tall and decide independently their own place within the family of free nations in the international community.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia
March 24, 1991

Dr. Ivan Bicko (far left), a member of the Advisory Council to the Slovak Republic for National Minorities, seated at the presidium of the First World Congress of Rusyns with the delegation chairpersons: Dr. Vasyl' Turok, Rusyn Renaissance Society; Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center; Vasyl' Sočka, Society of Carpatho-Rusyns; Andrej Kopča, Society of Lemkos; Ljubomir Medješi, Ruska Matka. Photo: Oleksander Zozuljak.

THE RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN THE PREŠOV REGION: THE GREEK CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

With the new-found freedom in Czechoslovakia following the revolution of November 1989, relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia have become strained. Here follows a recent public statement by Bishop Ján Hirka of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Prešov that appeared earlier this year in the Slovak press in Bratislava.—Editor

Recently, I have increasingly met with expressions of interest in my position concerning the present condition of relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Our mass media also have often been concerned with church-related problems; however, the media are usually content with a superficial look at individual events and thus serve only to confuse the issues further.

Various conflicting pieces of news can create a false impression that the Churches are concerned with nothing more than property, in the interest of which they are ready to ignore even the mandates of the Bible and to suppress each other. Information presented in such a fashion usually arouses offended feelings, grief, and disillusionment in many people, believers and non-believers. Still others ask sarcastically what kind of Churches are these which "don't know how to come to an agreement."

Where are the roots of the present problems?

Until 1950, the Orthodox Church had no more than 20 churches in Slovakia and a proportionate number of parishioners. The Greek Catholic Church had 434 churches, 72 chapels, 239 rectories, and approximately 300,000 parishioners. At that time there was absolutely no dissension between us. The problems began during the time of the Communist takeover when the state ruled by the Communist party misled several representatives of the Orthodox Church in order to pull the Greek Catholic Church away from Rome and to destroy it. As far as the state was concerned, the Greek Catholic Church ceased to exist. Its parishioners were to be automatically considered as Orthodox and in 1952 all its possessions were given over illegally and unconstitutionally to the Orthodox Church.

Totalitarian power committed a grievous wrong. It misled the representatives of one Christian denomination in order to liquidate another denomination, and by this it inflicted damage beyond measure upon both. It sowed the seeds of dissension between them—seeds which are growing like wild weeds, damaging our relations and distorting the joyful news of the Scriptures which both Churches are called to announce to the world.

Nor did the year 1968 change the situation. In that year, the Greek Catholic Church was again allowed to function, but justice was not restored. At that time we had a state which itself took control of our churches from us. It is deplorable that the state usually assumes some expedient posture and avoids any resolution of this urgent problem, limiting itself to "fatherly" admonitions, so that we among ourselves must somehow resolve the issues. As a result of this, a nervousness and tension which plays right into the hands of certain powers in the state has arisen among believers.

There is no question that we must demand back our churches. Justice requires this, and it is not something which is in any way at odds with love, but rather is its bearer. And we can demand them back only from those who took the churches from us, namely, the state. In this demand, however, the state is forcing us to negotiate with the Orthodox Church. In addition, the state is obviously ignorant of the fact that it has adopted the rules of the game forced upon it by the Stalinist regime of which the goal was to compromise and finally to liquidate both Churches.

As a result of this, we are left to exhaust ourselves in immediately unresolveable disagreements with the representatives of a Church [Orthodox] which the Communist system injured perhaps even more than us because in the eyes of the public it is often connected with the former regime.

I would like to point further to a legal measure taken on May 29, 1990, by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, which stipulates that property which before April 28, 1950, belonged to the Greek Catholic Church should be returned. However, it limits further property rights. The measure also states that if the Churches do not come to an agreement about a manner of the use of church buildings, then an authorized representative of the administration of the Slovak Republic will step in to make the decisions. It is clear that an authorized representative of the government, even with the best intentions, is not competent to make decisions about the property of others.

In view of the fact that the Orthodox Church is the closest to us among all the Christian denominations, we are not at all indifferent to its fate, nor to the fact that its reputation damaged by the state diminishes the reliability of its proclamation of the Gospels. First of all, the state which placed the Orthodox Church in such an unenviable situation must help her. I am convinced that neither we, nor the faithful of other churches, can shut ourselves off to help provided for the construction of sacred objects. In certain justified instances we are willing to offer the use of our church buildings, but from our own conviction and not by virtue of a decision made by the state.

To me, as a bishop of the Greek Catholic Church, it is clear that that which binds us together far surpasses any divisions between us. Therefore, I ask for a recovery of our reciprocal connections, so banefully acknowledged by totalitarian power, which ought to be established on the basis of simple respect between our Churches and ought to grow into a vital and fruitful dialogue. Finally, together with the other churches we ought to become a convincing witness of our mutual respect and love.

Bishop Ján Hirka
Eparchy of Prešov

THE RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY IN THE PREŠOV REGION: THE ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

In reaction to law no. 211, passed May 29, 1990 by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, the Orthodox Church feels it has been unjustly treated on the issue of church property. The following is a declaration with a counterproposal for a new law (not included here) sent to the Slovak government by the two Orthodox bishops for eparchies in Eastern Slovakia.—Editor

The so-called Prešov Church Council (Sobor) of 1950 led to the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. By a state decision, all fixed assets of the Greek Catholic Church became property of the Orthodox Church. In addition, the majority of Greek Catholic faithful were transferred to the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church looked after the former property of the Greek Catholic Church and made improvements in it over the years. The construction of new buildings for the use of the Orthodox Church was permitted by the state only in exceptional cases. The refusal to allow the construction of new buildings was justified on the part of the state by the fact that the Orthodox Church had gained several buildings from the Greek Catholic Church and, therefore, had no need for any new structures.

After 1968, when the Greek Catholic Church was again permitted to function, both denominations used the buildings together without any serious problems. Some former Greek Catholic faithful returned to the Greek Catholic Church and some remained in the Orthodox Church. A legal measure taken by the presidium of the Slovak National Council (no.211/90) concerning property relations between the Churches ordered that former Greek Catholic property should be transferred back to the Greek Catholic Church, without regard, however, to the new reality that a number of Greek Catholic faithful were now in the Orthodox Church.

At the same time, when he made his decisions called for in law no. 211, the government's appointed deputy did not take into consideration the number of faithful in the various parishes of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches. Nor did he fulfil the requirement outlined in paragraph 2, section 2 of the above-mentioned legal measure, according to which "the functioning of both churches must be guaranteed." While he secured the transfer of property rights over the real estate in question to the Greek Catholic Church, he did not guarantee the possibility that the Orthodox Church could share the use of the buildings.

In view of the growing tension among the faithful of both denominations and the obvious unbalance of conditions for the functioning of the churches to the detriment of the Orthodox Church, it is now necessary to amend the property rights regulations regarding the real estate of both denominations and to expand the possibility for shared use of the buildings. The church property in eastern Slovakia, which before 1950 was in the hands of both denominations and which was transferred to the Orthodox Church on the basis of a decree of the former state bureau for church affairs in Prague, must be divided on the basis of a legal norm which observes the rights of both proprietorial subjects [both denominations] according to the legal and actual situation in individual parishes and regions.

In deciding individual cases, the number of Greek Catholic or Orthodox faithful in parishes and in church lists where the real estate is located must be examined first and then the church doors must be opened for services for the Orthodox faithful in forty parishes where a unilateral decision was made about the transfer of property to the Greek Catholic Church without any agreement about the relationship of the users of the property. This has led to a gross violation of the paragraph 2, section 2 of law no. 211 of the Slovak National Council in which the government's deputy has reached decisions according to his own discretion and has placed restrictions on the Orthodox Church's ability to appeal those decisions.

In the process of reaching agreements about the property relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches, we must take into account also historical realities and legal precedent before 1950 and after 1968, in order to assure that the legal status of ownership corresponds accurately with the real status. We must avoid correcting one injustice by perpetrating another as was done in the past by the totalitarian system in our country.

As restitution, it is necessary to return property to its original owners or their descendants. If we take into consideration only the year 1950, the original owners were divided between the Orthodox and Greek Catholics in 1968, to both of whom ownership rights over church property was given. Thus, at present there are thus two legal proprietorial subjects who have equal legal rights to the division of the real estate. It is not possible to dispossess the Orthodox Church as an inheritor and lawful successor of the legal right to co-ownership of a portion of shared and assessed real estate.

The legal norm for any laws issued by the presidium of the Slovak National Council concerning the regulation of property relations between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox faithful must, in the end, emphasize the principles of democracy in today's society and must respect the rights of citizens for religious freedom as expressed in a recently-adopted document on human rights. In over ninety church parishes where there is a two-thirds' majority of Orthodox faithful, but who have been completely stripped of church property, we have seen a gross violation of those general and internationally recognized democratic rights, as well as discrimination against Orthodox communities who have an over 1000-year-old history.

By means of the legal actions which are proposed in this declaration, it should be possible finally to determine not only the legal property rights of both the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches after the approval of the proposed legal decree by the presidium of the Slovak National Council, but most importantly to establish ties between the churches which, after twenty years of coexistence in peace and brotherhood, are at the present fratricidal in nature.

Bishop Jan Golonič
Eparchy of Michalovce

Archbishop Nikolaj Kocvar
Eparchy of Prešov

Carpatho-Rusyn American
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A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage

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FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CARPATHO-RUSYN RESEARCH CENTER

The following remarks were delivered in Rusyn at the opening ceremonies of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce, June 30, 1991, by the president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi—Editor

Honored Guests, Dear Rusyn Brothers and Sisters!

As president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and as a citizen of the United States, it is an honor to be with you this morning in the context of a truly historic event—the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce. Why do I say that this is a historic event?

First of all, it is no accident that this museum has been established in Medzilaborce and not in some larger city in Czechoslovakia. This is because Medzilaborce and the surrounding area which is inhabited by Carpatho-Rusyns is the birthplace of the parents of Andy Warhol, one of the most influential artists and cultural figures in the United States, whose fame has spread worldwide during the second half of the twentieth century.

Relations between Rusyn immigrants in America and their Carpathian homeland had been very close in the distant past. For instance, in 1918, when the end of World War I brought radical political change throughout Eastern Europe, it was our people in the United States who first proposed to the world's leaders that their Rusyn brethren in the Carpathians join the new state of Czechoslovakia. The result was that Rusyns, alongside Slovaks and Czechs, were one of the three Slavic peoples who created the first Czechoslovak republic.

Contacts between Rusyns in the United States and Rusyns in Czechoslovakia remained close until World War II. Then, for the next fifty years—a whole half century—these contacts were broken. They were broken first by the tragedy of war and then by the descent of the Iron Curtain which artificially cut us off from our family and friends in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland.

Happily, the November Revolution of 1989 has made possible once again normal relations between the United States and Czechoslovakia, and therefore between Rusyns in America and Rusyns in what we have always called the "old country." In this context, it is most encouraging to note that these renewed contacts have taken place primarily through visits between family and friends, and now through the establishment of a cultural institution—the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce.

The promotion of culture and understanding between peoples within Europe and between Europe, America, and the rest of the world are what all of us must promote as we approach the threshold of the twenty-first century. The Museum of Modern Art in the Rusyn-inhabited heart of Europe is both a symbolic and concrete step toward a future Europe without political and ideological barriers.

Therefore, on this happy occasion, we must all be grateful to those far-sighted Rusyns of Medzilaborce like Michal Bycko and Michal Turok-Heteš, who first conceived the idea of a museum linked to the artistic heritage of Andy Warhol; to the mayor of Medzilaborce and to the officials of the Slovak government who lent their authority and financial support to the project; and most especially to the Warhola family in America, including Paul Warhola who is with us here today, and John Warhola, who first initiated contact with cultural activists in Medzilaborce a few months after their younger brother Andy unexpectedly died in 1987. Finally, gratitude must be extended to the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, which has committed itself to support a school of modern art in Medzilaborce.

Carpatho-Rusyns in America are truly proud of what you have done here not only for the people of the Medzilaborce region but also for the Europe of tomorrow.

Dr. Michal Bycko (center) and artist Michal Cihlář (right) at the First World Congress of Rusyns at Medzilaborce discuss with Dr. Paul R. Magocsi the upcoming opening of the Museum of Modern Art.

FEDIR VICO

Since the Revolution of 1989, the Carpatho-Rusyns have experienced a veritable national revival in their European homeland. Within less than two years, they have been officially recognized as a nationality in Czechoslovakia, and they have created organizations in that country as well as in Ukrainian Transcarpathia and the Lemko Region in Poland, where new organizations are working to improve the cultural and political status of Rusyns wherever they may live. Not surprisingly, all this "political" activity has been carried out by self-appointed leaders who, perhaps more often than is necessary, take themselves too seriously. Fortunately, the Rusyn movement, most especially in Czechoslovakia, includes activists who know how to laugh at themselves and at others around them.

Among the best-known of the present-day Rusyn cultural activists in Czechoslovakia is the artist and caricaturist Fedir Vico. Vico was born in 1955 in Šapinec, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia where both his parents functioned as village school teachers. Although his paternal and maternal parents both came from Rusyn villages (Vyšné Čabiny and Krajná Bystrá), their profession as teachers required that they move often. Thus, Fedir and his older brother began their lives and schooling first in Rusyn villages, but later they moved to western Slovakia (Bratislava and Zvolen) and farther still to Prague.

As a young boy, Vico was always interested in drawing, and to perfect his natural talents he was trained at the School of Industrial Arts in Bratislava. Another of his talents was a sense of irony and ability to poke satirical fun at the contradictions between the claims of Communist propaganda and the harsh realities of life in Czechoslovakia. His first political cartoons began to appear already in the early 1960s, and from 1965 through 1970, Vico became extremely popular through his series, "Dereš," which appeared in the Slovak magazine, *Roháč*. This series featured the legendary Slovak Robin Hood figure, Janošík. In Vico's hands, Janošík became an instrument to criticize the foibles of life in Slovakia.

Vico became best known among Rusyns through his series of political cartoons under the title. "il'ko Sova z Bajusova" (Il'ko the Owl from Bajusov—an imaginary Rusyn village), which appeared weekly from the mid-1960s to mid-1980s in *Nove žyttja*, the Ukrainian-language weekly newspaper published in Prešov. In fact, Vico's cartoons with their incisive satirical dialogues were for many years the only texts in that newspaper which appeared in the Rusyn language.

After an early life of "wandering" with his teacher-parents, since the mid-1960s Vico has made his home in Prešov, where he works out of a modest ground-level studio located opposite the Rusyn Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater. From this base, Vico is known by his cartoons throughout Czechoslovakia and abroad. Since the 1960s, his work has been exhibited in all the major cities of Czechoslovakia as well as several times abroad, in Turkey, Greece, Canada, Japan, Belgium, and the Netherlands. He has also won several awards at art competitions in Yugoslavia. Since the Revolution of 1989, he has drawn political cartoons for the best Czech-language daily newspaper in the country, Prague's *Lidové noviny*, and in 1991 he founded with his brother a satirical magazine, *Bumerang*, published in Slovak by the Rusyn Renaissance Society (*Rusyns'ka Obroda*) and distributed throughout the country in over 40,000 copies.

Despite his fame throughout Czechoslovakia and his widespread popularity in Prešov (there was even talk that he should run in local elections because he would probably be elected mayor of the city), Vico remains a Rusyn patriot committed to the current national revival. In a recent interview with a leading Czech magazine (*MF Dnes Vikénd*), Vico responded to a question about his Rusyn origins: "A lot of people in Slovakia don't even know what the word Rusyn means. Until now it was thought that we were Ukrainians... however, there is a difference between Rusyns and Ukrainians. They are by no means the same."

When in the summer of 1991, it was decided to publish a newspaper, *Narodnŷ novynkŷ* (The People's News), in the Rusyn language of the Prešov Region, it came as no surprise that the publisher, the Rusyn Renaissance Society, turned to Fedir Vico for the masthead design. Nor did he disappoint them. The Rusyn-language *Narodnŷ novynkŷ* is today one of the most attractive newspapers on stands in Czechoslovakia. And, of course, each issue is graced with a cartoon that pokes fun at current problems that face Rusyns: inflation, unemployment, displeasure with post-Communist political life, and conflict with the local Ukrainian intelligentsia. Through it all, Fedir Vico makes his readers laugh at themselves and thereby helps them get through another day.

Philip Michaels

"I'd prefer to remain a mystery. I never like to give my background and, anyway, I make it all up different every time I'm asked."

That statement reflects both the honesty and success of Andy Warhol, for until and even after his untimely death in 1987, few people had ever penetrated into the origins of the world famous artist and American cultural figure. At best, writers would take his own autobiographical references to Czechoslovakia as the birthplace of his parents and simplify that fact by describing him as a Czech. But after his death, an enormous interest in his career and background began not only in the United States and other centers of western culture, but also in eastern Europe (see "Czechoslovakia Discovers Andy," *C-RA*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1989, pp. 4-7).

Not surprisingly, Warhol has in the past four years become the subject of several major biographies issued by leading publishers in the United States and Europe. For the first time, most of them are clear and correct regarding the Carpatho-Rusyn origins of his family. In fact, it is only the sketchy biographical introduction by Kynaston McShine to the Museum of Modern Art's otherwise beautiful retrospective catalog that seems entirely unaware of the new information about Andy's background. It simply repeats the old incorrect data: "Born of immigrant, Roman Catholic Czech parents at the beginning of the Depression, Warhol grew up near the mills of Pittsburgh." (*Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989, p. 13).

Among the first of the full-scale biographies is one by Fred Lawrence Guiles, the author of several popular books about movie stars like Marilyn Monroe, Tyrone Power, and Jane Fonda. Guiles begins on the right track, but he is still confused, describing Andy's mother as "a tough-spirited Czech," who "spoke Czech in the home," even though "both of Andy's parents were from the Rusyn village of Miková in the Prešov Region of northeastern Czechoslovakia." (Fred Lawrence Guiles, *Loner at the Ball: The Life of Andy Warhol*. London and New York: Bantam Press, 1989, pp. 7, 9, 13).

Fortunately, the other biographers of Warhol no longer repeat the old misinformation that Andy himself had systematically encouraged. The following excerpts from two extensive studies have this to say about Warhol's background:

> "According to family members and school records, he was born in Pittsburgh on August 6, 1928. Christened Andrew Warhola, he was the youngest of three sons of Ondrej [Andrew] (1888-1942) and Julia Zavacky Warhola (1892-1972).
>
> "Both parents were Czechoslovakian immigrants who came from farming families in Miková, a Carpatho-Rusyn mountain village in the Prešov region of northeastern Slovakia near the Polish border.
>
> "Carpatho-Rusyn, in its Prešov region dialectical variant, was the official language at home, For Mrs. Warhola, English was a fiendishly difficult second language whose grammatical subtleties constantly eluded her. Andy goaded his mother to read the comics to him in English, but her thick accent so mangled the words that he often couldn't follow the story. He fully understood his parents' Rusyn dialect but preferred to communicate with them in English." (David Bourdon, *Warhol*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1989, pp. 14, 16-17).

□ □ □

> "Andy obscured his childhood in lies and myths from the moment he received any public attention."
>
> "[The Warholas] first son, Paul, had been born on 26 June 1922, their second, John, on 31 May 1925. The Warholas were Rusyns who had emigrated to America from the Ruthenian village of Miková in the Carpathian Mountains near the [present-day] borders of Russia [more precisely, the former Soviet Union—PRM] and Poland in territory that was, at the turn of the century, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire."
>
> "Religion played a large role in the Warhola house. They were devout Byzantine Catholics who observed the calendar of their faith...."
>
> "The Byzantine Catholic church was also the center of all Ruthenian social activity. This removed the Warholas further from the majority of their neighbors, who were Roman Catholics, but this isolation from the rest of the community was offset considerably by the extended Warhola and Zavacky families."
>
> "These descriptions fitted the Warhola family's neighborhood. Like blacks, who were the only ethnic group below them on the social scale, Eastern Europeans, contemptuously labelled 'hunkies', were dismissed as incapable and untrustworthy. Their religion, language and customs seemed strange to native Americans; their children were ridiculed and abused in school. They were given lower-paying jobs, and those with professional skills, like the doctors, were confined to practicing among their own people. Among hunkies themselves there was social stratification depending on their religion and country of origin. Because of the terrible treatment the Ruthenians had received at the hands of their neighbors, the Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Moldavians and Slovaks, they had become isolated and suspicious, kept to their own people and their own language, *po-našemu* ('in our own manner'), a mixture of Hungarian and Ukrainian.
>
> "Paul, John and Andy were brought up speaking *po-našemu*." (Victor Bokris, *Warhol*. London: Frederick Muller/Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1989, pp. 15-17, 20).

□ □ □

Perhaps the most authoritative of the new biographies is the 500-page book by Warhol's longtime collaborator and co-editor of his journal, *Interview*, Bob Colacello.

> "Of course, it's very American to put your past behind you. On one level, Andy embodied the American dream: the immigrants' son who made it to the top by dint of hard work and new ideas, like some Horatio Alger of the avant-garde. Yet he also consistently subverted that dream, in a wry and disturbing way. The same hand that glamorized fame also delineated its emptiness. This ambiguity at the core of his work

reflected the deep contradictions of his personality: Andy was innocent *and* decadent, primitive *and* sophisticated, shy *and* pushy, the eternal outsider at the center of a series of self-created In crowds. And the key to his personality, and perhaps his work, can be found in that past he so cleverly hid. Like many very American stories, Andy's really began in the 'Old Country.'

" 'I come from nowhere', Andy once said. And, for once, he wasn't lying. Ruthenia, the Eastern European land of his parents and grandparents, *was* nowhere. It can't be found on any maps—it's in the Carpathian Mountains, just north of Transylvania, at the point where the present-day boundaries of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and the Soviet Union meet. Its rulers—the Austro-Hungarian Empire until World War I, Czechoslovakia and Russia since then—have systematically denied the identity of its people as a distinct nationality. (The Hapsburgs liked to think of their Ruthenian subjects as 'Highland Hungarians', the Czechs called them 'Eastern Slovaks', and the Russians called them 'Western Ukrainians' or 'Little Russians'.) It has always been somebody else's backyard, in constant danger of disappearing into the cracks between clashing powers and cultures, and its people were always made to feel like aliens in their own country. As one of Andy's relations put it, 'In Europe, the Ruthenians were the poorest of the poor. We never even had a flag'.

"They barely had a language. Until 1914, school was taught in Magyar, the language of the Hungarian rulers. Ruthenian itself was a goulash of archaic Ukrainian and modern Slovak, with many Magyar, Polish, and even German words thrown in. It was sometimes written in Cyrillic letters, like Ukrainian (and Russian), and sometimes written in Roman letters, like Slovak (and English). Most Ruthenians didn't go to school, and couldn't read or write in *any* language. At the beginning of this century, the illiteracy rate in Ruthenia was between 70 and 90 percent, and there were many villages without a single literate person. Ruthenian literature was pretty much limited to folk plays performed by amateur troupes. According to Professor Paul Magocsi, one of the most popular plays tells of the Ruthenian 'everyman and anti-hero, David Schrapnel, who like his more famous Czech counterpart, Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik*, undermined the operations of the Austro-Hugarian army by his ironic and seemingly innocent stupidity'. (That sounds a lot like Andy.)"

"When Andy was born, the Warholas lived in Soho, a working-class neighborhood overlooking the Monongahela River and the belching steel mills that blocked both its banks. Pittsburgh was the steel, aluminum, and glass capital of America then, and so polluted that the street lights had to be turned on at noon. Soho was a rough place to grow up, particularly for the children of the Eastern European immigrants who were pushing out the more established Irish factory workers, and perhaps most of all for the Ruthenians, who found their identity crisis made all the more acute in a country where the first question most people asked of newcomers was 'What are you?'

" 'We didn't know what we were', a Warhola neighbor says. 'B-a-s-t-a-r-d-s', adds her husband, 'is what I always refer to our people as'. Most Ruthenian-Americans seem to define their nationality in negatives: 'We're not Polish. We're not Hungarian. We're not Slovaks. We're not Ukrainian'. When I asked the Warhola brothers what nationality they considered themselves when they were growing up, John without hesitation said, 'Always Slovak'. But Paul said that if he used 'Slovak lingo, Mother criticized me. She said, "What's the matter with you? You're talking like a Slovak." We always figured we were Slavish, and Slavish was a little different than Slovak'." (Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990, pp. 10-11, 14.

□ □ □

Thus, it seems that the question of Andy Warhol's background has been resolved in the minds of his most recent biographers. The symbolic significance of this Carpatho-Rusyn background has also been recognized by the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, which has not only created a Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh but also has given its support to establish a School of Modern Art in memory of the artist in the small town of Medzilaborce, just a few kilometers from the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Miková, the birthplace of Andy's parents.

Paul Robert Magocsi
University of Toronto

A REQUEST FOR CONTACTS

The Andy Warhol Fan Club in Czechoslovakia would like to make contact with other organizations of young artists and admirers of Pop Art and Andy Warhol in the United States. The Fan Club is interested in corresponding, and exchanging experiences, views, and informational materials. The club is involved in audiovisual programs and video projects on Andy Warhol. It also organizes discussions and gatherings of artists and admirers of Pop Art and Andy Warhol, as well as conversations with Warhol's relatives and young avant-garde artists and friends of the creative arts. The club responds to all inquiries. Address letters to Josef Keselica, ul. Dr. Goldbergera M15, 08901 Svidník, Czechoslovakia.

OUR FRONT COVER

The logo of the Andy Warhol Fan Club in Czechoslovakia. (See the announcement, **A REQUEST FOR CONTACTS**, in this issue).

REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. In June 1991, the Office of Statistics of the Slovak Republic announced the preliminary results of the decennial census conducted throughout Czechoslovakia in March of this year. The census form had three related questions: 11. State Citizenship; 12. Nationality; and 13. Mother Tongue. Individuals could respond to questions 12 and 13 with the term Rusyn, which was listed as one of the possibilities under question 12 (*národnost': rusínska*) and question 13 (*materinský jazyk: rusínsky*). However, in the summary on the front page of each census form, the names Ukrainian, Rusyn (*ukrajinská, rusínska*) appeared together as one category for the nationality question. This caused confusion in many people's minds.

Information on Mother Tongue is not yet available. The preliminary data on nationality is as follows: in Slovakia 16, 937 persons identified themselves as Rusyns, and 13, 847 as Ukrainians. Together, this is 7,000 less than the 37,000 persons who were classified as Ukrainian (regardless how they may have identified themselves) in the 1980 census. Thus, the vast majority of the estimated 120,000 Rusyns living in the Prešov Region continue to identify themselves as Slovaks.

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. On June 20, 1991, the Slovak Ministry of Culture informed the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník that according to a new law (no. 518/1990(. its name has been changed to the Svidník Regional Museum (Vlastivedné Múzeum Svidník.) The former Museum of Ukrainian Culture was established in 1956 in Krásny Brod and was transferred to Svidník in 1964. Since that time it has specialized in collecting and displaying materials on the history, culture, and ethnography of the Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region, and secondarily on Ukrainian émigrés in Bohemia and other parts of Czechoslovakia. On June 16 of this year, the museum opened a stunning new exhibit of Carpatho-Rusyn history within an expanded building paid for by the government.

Despite its achievements, criticism has mounted since early 1990 among organizations like the Rusyn Renaissance Society that the museum should not carry the name Ukrainian. Responding to such criticism, the Slovak Minister of Culture, Dr. Ladislav Snopko, issued the new decree on April 1, 1991, although he did not announce it until late June. Accompanying the decree is a new statute, which specifies that the renamed Svidník Regional Museum should concern itself with the indigenous Rusyns and Ukrainians in the Prešov Region of eastern Slovakia and not with Ukrainian immigrants and their descendants in other parts of Czechoslovakia. Not surprisingly, the ministerial decision has prompted the pro-Ukrainian intelligentsia to claim that their people are being "de-Ukrainianized." Spokespersons for the Rusyn Renaissance Society would have preferred that the new name indicated in some way that the museum is Rusyn. Nonetheless, they welcome the ministerial move as well as an earlier decision in December 1990 that changed the name and cultural orientation of the Ukrainian National Theater to the Aleksander Duchnovyč Theater (see the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, 1991, p. 7); and they look forward to how the government will deal with the remaining Ukrainian-oriented cultural institutions, such as the Prešov radio station, publishing house, and university departments.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On June 29, 1991, the Interregional Committee of the World Congress of Rusyns held its first bi-annual meeting. All five heads of the component organizations of the World Congress were present: Dr. Vasyl' Turok, Rusyn Renaissance Society (Czechoslovakia) and coordinator for the World Congress; Vasyl' Sočka, Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Soviet Transcarpathia); Andrej Kopča and Petro Trochanovskij, Society of Lemkos (Poland); Ljubomir Medješi, Ruska Matka (Yugoslavia); and Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (United States).

Among the main topics of discussion were the continual changes in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union and the question of how the World Congress should respond. It was reiterated that the World Congress is comprised of cultural organizations and that cultural, not political activity should be its primary concern.

The Interregional Committee was informed that Slovakia's Ministry of Culture has provided a reasonable budget to support a Rusyn-language press. Extensive discussion was held with Oleksander Zozuljak (until recently editor of *Nove žyttja*), who with his staff has accepted the editorship of two Rusyn-language publications. The magazine *Rusyn* will continue to appear every two months as the organ of the World Congress and, therefore, be concerned with Rusyns in all countries where they live. A new bi-weekly newspaper, *Narodnŷ novynkŷ* (The People's News), is intended specifically for Rusyns in Czechoslovakia.

Užhorod, Ukraine. In July 1991, after nearly half a year, the monthly newspaper of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, *Otčyj chram* (The Home of Our Fathers), has begun to appear once again. Unlike the first issues that appeared in 1991 in Ukrainian (see the *C-RA*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, front cover), the newspaper is now published entirely in Rusyn. In the words of its editor, Ivan Kerča: "Since our goal is the renaissance of the Rusyn language, we will publish material in the speech of the Rusyn population of Transcarpathia. . . . Until a final decision on the codification of the Rusyn language, we will follow the rules set out in the [Rusyn] grammars of Mychajl Lučkaj, Ivan Harajda, and Ivan Pan'kevyč." Although we do not have concrete information on the cost of *Otčyj chram*, we suggest you send $10.00 (US check or international money order) to: Ivan Kerča, redaktor; Otčyj chram, holovna počta, skr. 43; 294000 Užhorod, Ukraine.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On July 26, 1991, the newspaper *Nove žyttja*, the official organ of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia (SRUČ), published a special insert entitled: "A Position Paper of the Ukrainian Creative Intelligentsia Regarding the Present Cultural and Political Situation in Eastern Slovakia." The basic argument put forth is that political conditions in post-Communist Czechoslovakia have since late 1989 made it possible to discuss and analyze more openly the nationality question, but at the same time individuals within Czechoslovakia and abroad have contributed to "destablilizing the Ukrainian community, especially in the Prešov Region. In short, these individuals have created what the authors of this position paper call "political Rusynism" (*polityčnyj Rusynizm*), an effort to create a "new nationality" distinct from Ukrai-

nians. The "Position Paper" rejects these efforts as unscholarly and as a factor contributing to further Slovakization.

The "Position Paper" requests the following from different sectors of society: (1) that the governments of the Czech and Slovak Republics retain the term Rusyn-Ukrainian as the official term of the group; (2) that SRUČ create a commission of specialists to analyze the present socio-economic and cultural-political status of the "Ukrainian minority in Slovakia"; (3) that the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches respect the nationality interests of their faithful; (4) that the Ukrainian intelligentsia work to undermine "political ideologies and representatives of the Rusyn Renaissance Society" (Rusyns'ka Obroda), since the "idea of a distinct 'Rusyn people' is a fantasy inspired by political interests working against the people"; and (5) that "all Rusyn-Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia . . . unite behind the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia."

The "Position Paper" was initially signed by 52 pro-Ukrainian cultural activists and is likely authored by its first co-signers: the historian Dr. Ivan Vanat, the linguist Professor Mykola Štec'; and the literary historian Dr. Fedir Kovač. Since its first appearance in July, SRUČ has conducted a campaign to gain further signatures which are published each week in *Nove žyttja*.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On August 12, 1991, the RUCH Organization in Slovakia (Ob"jednannja Ruch Slovac'koji Respubliky) was established. Its primary goal is "to sustain and develop the national identity of the Rusyn-Ukrainian nationality on the territory of the Slovak republic." The organization takes its name RUCH (which in Ukrainian means: the movement) from a similar body founded in 1989 in Kiev to promote Ukrainian culture and patriotism throughout what was then the Soviet Ukraine. Like SRUČ (the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia) and other pro-Ukrainian organizations in the Prešov Region, RUCH is very much concerned with the Rusyn national revival. Pro-Ukrainian spokespersons distinguish between what they consider "popular" Rusynism (*narodnyj rusynizm*), whose goal is to study and preserve the local vernacular speech and culture, and "political Rusynism" (*polityčnyj rusynizm*), whose goal is to "create . . . a distinct Rusyn nationality." The pro-Ukrainian organizations support popular Rusynism but are opposed to political Rusynism, since they believe that Rusyns are a branch of the Ukrainian nationality.

RECENT EVENTS

Johnstown, Pennsylvana. From August 30 to September 1, 1991, Johnstown's ethnic Cambria City neighborhood hosted the 53rd National Folk Festival. The event, in its second year of a scheduled three-year run in Johnstown, drew a crowd estimated at between 120,000-150,000. This year's festival included an extensive Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and informational exhibit, which was housed inside the school hall of St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church. Mannequins were used to display costumes from various regions of Carpathian Rus'. The exhibit also contained books distributed by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, *ručniky* (ritual cloths), icons, wood carvings, ceramics, axes, *pysanky*, and other Rusyn cultural items. The display items were borrowed from the private collections of Jerry Jumba of Herminie, Pennsylvania; Michael and Helen Ozimok of Seward, Pennsylvania; Pauline Florina of Bensenville, Illinois; and Mary Oldham of Windber, Pennsylvania. The display was organized and staffed by Dave Felix of Johnstown and Keith Koshute of Windber. In addition, videos pertaining to Carpatho-Rusyns were shown at the booth, and *pysanky* demonstrations were conducted by Keith Koshute. The National Council for the Traditional Arts serves as the festival's primary sponsor.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On October 5, 1991, the recently-established Museum of Modern Art opened an exhibit of the works of the Warhol family. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of thirteen original works by Andy Warhol, donated for an indefinite period to the Medzilaborce Museum by the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York City. Also included in the exhibition are paintings by Andy's older brother, Paul Warhola of Pittsburgh, and the latter's son, John Warhola of New York. Particularly valuable display items are family artifacts, including the clothes in which Andy was baptized, the first camera owned by the future artist and film maker, and letters in Rusyn by his mother to the family in her nearby native village of Miková. Among those who spoke at the opening were Dr. Ladislav Snopko, minister of culture of Slovakia; John Warhola, vice-president of the Andy Warhol Foundation; and Alexander Franko, recently-appointed director of the Medzilaborce museum.

To enhance the historic occasion and to add an element of outlandishness that was so characteristic of Andy Warhol, Czechoslovak railways organized Warhol Tour '91, which provided a special 14-car railroad train that made the trip from Prague to Medzilaborce for the opening of the exhibit. Hundreds of passengers, including several Czech avant-garde artists and Andy's brother John Warhola, were entertained by three bands and four bars that functioned throughout the 14-hour trip from Prague to the Rusyn town of Medzilaborce in the far eastern corner of Czechoslovakia.

Štiřín, Czechoslovakia. From October 10 to 13, 1991, the New York-based Institute for East-West Security Studies held at its European Studies Center located in the castle of Štiřín, just outside of Prague, a conference on "European Institutions and the Protection of National Minorities in East Central Europe and the Balkans." The twenty-eight invited participants included diplomats, parliamentarians, and government officials from eastern Europe as well as scholars from several countries in Europe and North America. The object was to review the present status of six national minorities in eastern Europe and for specialists in international law to suggest ways in which these minorities can be protected. Among the case studies chosen for analysis were the Carpatho-Rusyns. Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, director of the Mulitcultural History Society of Ontario and president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, was invited to report on the present status of Rusyns. He also gave the conference's opening address on the future of national minorities in the new Europe.

THE WARHOL STORY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

It is a paradox that here in Czechoslovakia we have begun to discover Andy Warhol, an artist with an international reputation, only after his death on February 22, 1987. Nearly twenty years before, he had told a visiting relative from Czechoslovakia that he would make a trip to the homeland, but that was not to be. Andy's ancestral homeland is the moutainous Rusyn lands of northeast Slovakia, the magnificent Carpathian region where to this day people speak his native language, Rusyn. Surely his personal world was as mysterious as the solitary mountains, and only now after his death has he at last come home by means of his creative legacy and a few unique personal items.

Andy's brother, John Warhola, came to visit the homeland of his parents for the first time in September 1987. He travelled to Miková, a village near Medzilaborce which was the birthplace of his parents. On that occasion, Dr. Michal Bycko invited Warhola to a private viewing of an exhibition of paintings by a local artist, Zuzana Hapáková-Osavčuková, which he had organized in Medzilaborce. In the course of their conversations, Bycko and Warhola discussed the possibility of the acquisition of some of Andy's works, at least two originals. At the time, Warhola suggested that there ought to be a gallery near Miková bearing the name of Andy Warhol, and he promised his cooperation to achieve such a venture. He was subsequently quoted in the newspaper *Nove žyttja* (October 16, 1987) as saying: "We would like to bequeath several artistic works of Andy Warhol to the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník in order that a gallery be organized there which would carry his name." Warhola had already become the vice-president of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in New York. But in those difficult days of Communist rule, neither the Svidník museum nor other institutions and organizations which Bycko contacted had any interest in what they described as the "bourgeois pseudo-artist Warhol and that dull pop art." Bycko tried in vain to find officials who might grasp the significance of this unique possibility. Although he found no understanding among Communist functionaries, he did not give up.

Bycko next initiated correspondence and telephone contact with the Andy Warhol Foundation and its vice-president, John Warhola. He wrote several articles about Andy Warhol for the Czech and Slovak press, and he distributed a great deal of informational material in order to support the founding of a gallery. Since there was no building to house a gallery and no one to whom to give the two promised paintings, he began working for the establishment of a new gallery in Medzilaborce, which is about 13 kilometers from the Warhola homestead in Miková. This was a difficult and time-consuming task.

In 1988, a construction company in Prešov was hired to renovate the old post office building in Medzilaborce as the Andy Warhol Gallery under the guidance of architect Václav Kolmajer. (See "Czechoslovakia Discovers Andy," *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Fall 1989, pp. 4-7). But this first plan failed. Nor did the name take hold, because the word "gallery" connotes a less than permanent institution. Thus, Bycko and others continued to talk and write about founding a genuine museum, and this project enjoyed the support of the new government that came to power in Czechoslovakia after the Revolution of November 1989.

In order to promote the idea of a museum, Dr. Bycko proposed to the residents of Medzilaborce that an Andy Warhol Society (Spoločnost' Andy Warhola) be established. This, in fact, occurred on March 2, 1990. Vladislav Grešlík, an art historian and instructor in the Department of Creative Arts at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Prešov, became the society's president. The very next month, the Ministry of Finance allotted funds to finance the renovation of the old post office building in Medzilaborce as the Andy Warhol Museum according to revised plans by the architect Štefan Pacák. The project received the substantial sum of 10 million crowns for this purpose.

Paul Warhola of Pennsylvania (right) and Warhola family member John Zavacky at the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce, June 30, 1991. Photo: Jozef Keselica.

In April 1990, at the invitation of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and with the financial participation of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, a three-man delegation travelled to New York City and Pittsburgh. Their visit was organized and subsidized largely by the Byzantine Catholic Church hierarchy and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. The delegation included a Medzilaborce town official, Dr. Michal Turok-Heteš; a Warhola family member, Vladimír Protivňak; and a representative of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, Dr. Ivan Bicko. (See the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring 1990, p. 11). Not included in the delegation was Dr. Michal Bycko, who was the driving force behind the museum idea. The group did meet with the Andy Warhol Foundation, but as New York's *Village Voice* reported: the delegation came without concrete plans or any notion of how the museum should be organized and financed. The foundation itself was patient and understanding, but not much was accomplished. Meanwhile, several other cities in Czechoslovakia began to compete for the Warhol museum, among them Svidník, Humenné, Košice, Martin, Bratislava, and Prague.

Meanwhile, activists in Medzilaborce were not about to give up on the idea that they had initiated, and led by Dr. Michal Bycko they established in 1990 the Andy Warhol Museum Society. They planned to complete the museum by August 6 (the artist's birthday), but instead of a grand opening there appeared a published announcement that the Andy Warhol Museum would not be established because an institution with that same name had already been founded in Pittsburgh. Bycko instead proposed a new name, "Art Studio of the Andy Warhol Society," and sent to the president of the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, Archibald Gillies, an eight-point project with the following goals:

(1) to organize an annual international art exhibit (Biennale);

(2) to provide young artists with scholarships to work in studios;

(3) to organize symposia on modern art and on the life of Andy Warhol and other pop artists;

(4) to set up an experimental video studio for the work of young film makers;

(5) to establish a school for the creative arts;

(6) to organize a permanent exhibit of the Ukrainian avant-garde painter and sculptor from Galicia who worked in Prague, Ivan Kulec';

(7) to foster the exchange of art exhibits; and

(8) to set up an art center employing at least five people.

In the spring of 1990, at a meeting of Medzilaborce's Andy Warhol Society, the head of the ATYPIK construction firm in Košice, Ján Oleksinčin, promised that the reconstruction work for the museum would be completed by September 1. At the same time, the residents of Miková had their own plans. On September 12, 1990, the Miková village council wrote to Minister of Culture Snopko and proposed that the Warhola family house be reconstructed and for this purpose requested 19 million crowns. The author of the project was to be architect Sergej Choma. Then, as now, opinions remain mixed as to whether or not this project should be realized.

Also in September 1990, John Warhola again visited Medzilaborce and Miková, this time with his son Mark. Both attended the grand opening of an exhibit of Warhol originals in the Wallenstein Palace in Prague. Warhola was sent by the New York foundation to look for a building appropriate for the museum. He also reported that the foundation did not want the proposed museum to carry the name of Andy Warhol, becuase such a museum already existed in Andy's home town in the United States. After considering several alternatives, the Medzilaborce activists decided on a new name: the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce with an Exhibition by the Andy Warhol Family. Medzilaborce citizens also wanted the street on which the museum was to be built renamed "Andy Warhol Street." A new completion date was set for February 22, 1991, the anniversary of Warhol's death.

John Warhola took back to the United States the plans given him by Dr. Bycko and the Andy Warhol Society for the new museum. They included the following elements:

(1) a permanent exposition on the family of Andy Warhol;

(2) a rotating display of avant-garde art by local artists;

(3) an art school for children aged 7 to 15 years, with permanent teachers working in cooperation with creative artists from across Czechoslovakia;

(4) A publishing house for promotional materials and other publications; and

(5) a video studio and museum shop.

After returning home, Warhola telephoned to inform the Andy Warhol Society that the New York foundation agreed with the plan and was willing to finance the art school for five or more years. In addition, the foundation would give the museum up to ten paintings. All of this was offered on the condition that the building be completed by June 1991.

At the end of November 1990, however, work on the building was halted because of construction difficulties. In such circumstances, the society and its vice president, Dr. Bycko, feared that the conditions regarding the completion date would not be met.

The situation of the "Warhol Museum" also disturbed artists. The Prague painter, Michal Cihlář, together with the photographer Rudo Prekop said that the fate of the museum hung on a thread. The situation had become critical, especially since the Andy Warhol Foundation, which originally had offered two paintings for free, now spoke of making available fifteen originals (which would be exchanged for new ones approximately every five years) and about providing funds for various stipends and museum operational expenses. Cihlář and Prekop complained about the construction problems and bemoaned the lax approach of the Medzilaborce town authorities.

On January 21, 1991, in a televised discussion following a documentary on Andy Warhol, Dr. Michal Turok-Heteš, director of the Medzilaborce cultural center and Andrej Čerevka, the town official responsible for the construction, tried to convince viewers that they were doing all they could in order to meet the June construction deadline. The following day, Dr. Bycko received a letter in which the New York foundation announced that in March or April they would send an architect to inspect the exhibition space. However, it was now clear that the construction firm, ATYPIK from Košice, would be unable to complete the reconstruction of the old post office even with the sufficient finances and substantial amount of time it had been allotted.

Then, on February 14, news of an alternate decision was announced. The Museum of Modern Art would be housed in the newly-built Cultural Center in Medzilaborce. Three days later, the architects Kríž and Pacák met with the Andy Warhol Society, proposed designing the plaza in front of the Cultural Center in an "Andy Warhol style," and announced June 6 as the completion date for the whole project. In early March, Dr. Bycko announced the changes to the public, stating in the press that it was the decision of the Medzilaborce city council to offer the Cultural Center for the use of the museum. With this new plan, the Andy Warhol Society wrote the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, asking that an architect be sent to determine what preparations needed to be made to house the expected Warhol originals.

In the meantime, on March 23, the Cultural Center in Medzilaborce opened its doors for the first time to host representatives from five countries (Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the United States) at the First World Congress of Rusyns. At that gathering, Henrieta

Artist Paul Warhola and the mayor of Medzilaborce look on as Ladislav Snopko, Minister of Culture of Slovakia, opens the new Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce on June 30, 1991. Photo: Antonin Žižka.

Blumenfeldová, manager of the Andy Warhol Society, proposed a bold and magnificent plan for broadening the activity of the Medzilaborce museum. To realize her plan, fifty million crowns would be necessary from the Slovak or Czechoslovak federal government, or from private sponsors. The plan included contruction of a new hotel in Medzilaborce; a house of culture with a movie theater, casino, nightclub, Rusyn restaurant, and sauna; access to hunting reserves in the surrounding countryside; a golf course; a baseball team from Medzilaborce; the creation of an incorporated company; and connections with travel agents to organize excursions from the United States.

In late March, the foundation sent to Medzilaborce Helena Fierlinger, an American of Czech origin and a member of Charter 77, in order to check on the state of preparations for the museum. She was impressed with the new Cultural Center, built with extensive funding from the former Communist regime in what became known as the style of "socialist megalomania." The Medzilaborce authorities again promised they would do everything necessary, and she said that if all went well the Andy Warhol Foundation would give the museum ten Warhol paintings. During her visit Fierlinger also went to Miková where she saw the eighteenth-century church in which Andy's parents, Andrej Varchola and Júlia Závacká, were married in 1909, and which some Americans had promised to help renovate with a monetary donation.

It was also at this time that Slovakia's Minister of Culture, Ladislav Snopko, noted that the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce did not fall under the jurisdiction of his ministry, but that it was the responsibility of the town of Medzilaborce and possibly the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York. Before it could become the responsibility of the Slovak Ministry of Culture, there would need to be a new legislative agreement between the ministry and the foundation, and that this would probably entail a long and complicated process. In the view of the ministry, the Medzilaborce citizens had taken on a project which they were incapable of completing. The ministry's proposal was that there simply be a memorial plaque or monument in the village of Miková; that in Medzilaborce there be a museum containing perhaps Warhol memorabilia; and that farther south in the large city of Košice there might be an Andy Warhol Gallery which would be dedicated, in particular, to avant-garde art.

Despite the various proposals and counterproposals, at last on Sunday, June 30, 1991, the long-awaited opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce took place. It featured an exposition about the Andy Warhol family. At this important event, minister Snopko stated in a television broadcast that it was his hope that by the end of the year the museum would come under the care of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The guest of honor was Andy's oldest brother, Paul Warhola, whose own paintings were widely displayed as part of the new museum's permanent collection. Also present was Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in New Jersey. In an opening speech, Magocsi said that it was not by chance that the new museum was in Medzilaborce, because to this day the town is inhabited by Rusyns and Andy Warhol's background is Rusyn. The date June 30 was also not accidental, since it was chosen to coincide with the 29th annual Rusyn Festival of Culture and Sports in Medzilaborce in which many local and foreign folk ensembles participated.

Now that a Museum actually existed, it was easier for the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York to make available the long-awaited Warhol originals. With the foundation's vice-president, John Warhola, acting as intermediary, a grand opening was set for October 5, 1991. Nearly 2,000 visitors from across Czechoslovakia and from abroad attended. These included artists, dramatists, and 300 journalists. Many came to Medzilaborce on a special fourteen-car Warhol Tour train from Prague, including Andy's brother John Warhola and Paul's son, the graphic artist James Warhola. The event received wide press coverage and was broadcast on Czechoslovak national television. Warhol posters and other memorabilia were offered for sale, and a lively cultural program created by artists, actors, and musicians was presented. Rusyn folk ensembles sang and danced their way around the large round kiosks in front of the museum which were decorated like Warhol's Campbell Soup cans. Actors dressed and coiffed in the style of Andy circulated through the crowd, while several avant-garde, rock, and punk bands performed late into the night, creating an atmosphere that led one observer to note: "This is the biggest shock to Medzilaborce since World War II!"

The Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce is now an established entity. All year (except Mondays) visitors can see originals and reproductions of the works of Andy Warhol, Paul Warhola, and unique personal items, documents, and photographs of the Warhola family. Exhibits of other avant-garde and Pop artists from Czechoslovakia and abroad are also on display.

Thanks to the enormous effort of those affiliated with the Andy Warhol Society, much has been accomplished in a short time. Most deserving of praise is Dr. Michal Bycko, without whose efforts the museum and related activity surrounding Warhol would have been impossible. The preparation and design of the museum's interior and exterior was carried out gratis by Michal Cihlář and Rudo Prekop. The museum also contains an exhibit of works by both Cihlář and Prekop which relate to Warhol—Cihlář his graphics and Prekop his photographs. They also created unique posters for all the exhibits in the museum. Helping further to prepare the interior and the surrounding grounds were numerous enthusiastic volunteers and students from Medzilaborce high schools.

> And thus has returned the son of simple, poor Rusyn peasants,
> Who went into the world to swim in bigger waters, to look for work, to secure a crust of bread
> And to find a better life.
> Their son, who rose to international fame
> And who made his mark in the world,
> Became a glorious and renown artist in many spheres of art.
> And as a millionare, he became a glowing example of the fulfillment of the American Dream.

Andy Warhol will live on by means of the spiritual and material wealth which he has left not only in America and in the world at large, but also to us in the homeland of his parents—the Rusyn-inhabited region of Czechoslovakia.

Jozef Keselica
Svidník, Czechoslovakia

GREETINGS FROM THE C-RRC

The following greetings were extended on May 23, 1991, to the Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, D.D., recently retired as Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Ruthenian Rite Catholic Church in the United States.—Editor

It is, indeed, a privilege to be able to share with you these thoughts on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebration of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, D.D., Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh, Byzantine Rite, marking the golden anniversary of his priestly ordination and the thirty-fifth anniversary of his episcopal consecration.

Many of you have certainly heard of or experienced first hand the pastoral and spiritual work that Metropolitan Kocisko has been engaged in for the past half century. For this alone tens of thousands of clergy and the faithful will forever be in his debt. But there is another side to Metropolitan Kocisko's career that is perhaps less well known but no less significant.

It is no exaggeration to say that Metropolitan Stephen J. Kocisko will go down in history as the outstanding patron of the history and culture of what for all too long has been prosaically described as "our people." Although most of the early Rusyn immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains were poor and had little formal education, there were nonetheless from the beginning religious leaders and secular cultural activists who left a rich legacy of Rusyn-American history.

By the last quarter of the twentieth century, that legacy was largely forgotten by the descendants of those early immigrants who had started coming in large numbers to these shores over one hundred years ago. In the end, that legacy was not lost, and much of the credit for this must go to Metropolitan Kocisko. He had the insight to realize the value of archival materials, newspapers, books, and other artifacts produced by Rusyn Americans. Most importantly, he expressed this insight not in words but in deeds!

Working closely with secular scholars at some of North America's leading universities, it was Metropolitan Kocisko who took the lead in preserving all the newspapers and journals ever produced by Rusyn Americans, regardless of religious or political persuasion. It was Metropolitan Kocisko who generously helped to underwrite the cost of scholarly monographs about Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe and America that have enriched thousands of our own people as well as fellow Americans, and which perhaps would not have seen the light of day were it not for him. Finally, when after forty years of repressive totalitarian Communist rule in the European homeland ended, it was the seventy-five-year-old Metropolitan Kocisko who took the initiative to lead a delegation of Byzantine Catholic hierarchs to show their support for the Greek Catholic eparchies of Mukačevo and Prešov from where the American church derives. This historic journey to a place he had never been before had an enormously positive moral and spiritual impact on the faithful and hierarchs in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, who today are slowly but surely finding their way to a renewed life.

All such cultural acts have helped to enlighten an ever greater number of Byzantine Ruthenian Rite Carpatho-Rusyn Americans about their cultural and historical roots. This, in turn, has reemphasized the need for the continuing presence of a distinct Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church in America and of a Greek Catholic Church in Carpathian Rus' that serves living communities.

We in the secular world salute you, Metropolitan Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko, for all you have done on behalf of the cultural and spiritual welfare of our people. You have been a model in the twentieth century. We hope your example will be continued by your successors in the twenty-first century. *Vam mnohaja i blahaja lita.*

Paul Robert Magocsi, President
Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc.

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Orestes Mihaly (Armonk, New York) has continued to make his annual matching gifts in the amount of $350 in 1990 and $350 in 1991. These donations have been matched each year by his employer, Merrill Lynch. At the request of Mr. Mihaly, these funds have been deposited by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in a special account: Chair of Carpatho-Rusyn Studies Fund. To date the total of Mr. Mihaly's donations and matching gifts is $2,400.

Another major donor to the C-RRC is Helen Aldrich (Bend, Oregon), who in June 1991 donated $500 to the Rusyn Cultural Fund. Monies from this fund are being used to support cultural activity in the Rusyn homeland in Europe.

The C-RRC also extends its appreciation to the following persons for their donations in 1991:

John Baymor (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania), $75
John Petro Garbera (New York, New York), $50
Mary G. Lucas (Hershey, Pennsylvania), $25
Ted Macosko (Berea, Ohio), $150
John E. Petrick (Brooklyn, New York), $25

Remember that donations to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (a non-profit cultural organization registered in the State of New York) are tax deductible. Perhaps you might wish to follow the example of Orestes Mihaly and, if possible, take advantage of matching funds at your place of employment that can be put to use on behalf of Rusyn culture.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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